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THE REALITIES
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

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THE REALITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

BY

GERALD B. SMITH AND THEODORE G. SOARES

AN OUTLINE BIBLE-STUDY COURSE



THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE
HYDE PARK, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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1918

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Published September 1918
Second Impression September 1923
Third Impression August 1927

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

FOREWORD TO THE STUDENT

The following studies are arranged in accordance with the method of other studies in the same series; namely, the assignment of a daily portion to be read and considered from various points of view. Unlike most of the courses of THE INSTITUTE, this course draws its material from Christian experience in all ages and of many sorts. Selections other than Biblical writings are printed in full unless easily accessible to all.

In order to carry on such a course as outlined in this book, it is not absolutely necessary that the daily study arrangement shall be followed. For the completion of the course by such an arrangement, an expenditure of fifteen minutes a day ought to be sufficient. It may in many cases be more convenient to spend more time than this upon the work and at longer intervals. Those who desire, therefore, to ignore the division into daily portions may combine the selections into weekly tasks or such divisions as are most convenient to them.

In any case read each day's portion carefully, and if possible think it through until you can satisfactorily consider the questions which the instructor raises. The ability to think clearly will be one of the most valuable results of this study. If you should find a question which puzzles or disturbs you, and it is not easy to satisfy yourself concerning it on the day on which you find it, pass on to the next day's work without anxiety. It is very possible that the question will answer itself through your later study. If you are satisfied after some time that the question is still unanswered, refer it to THE INSTITUTE headquarters and help will be given you by correspondence.

Although the majority of people using this and other courses of THE INSTITUTE are in groups under the leadership of a minister or interested layman, thousands are working by themselves. One who finds it necessary so to work should not feel that he is gaining less than those who, seemingly more fortunate, study in groups. It is frequently the case that work done by one's self, in earnest mood and with the help of the detailed directions for study, is more thoroughly done and productive of more lasting results

than the work in groups. Persons working alone should see that their names are enrolled as members at the headquarters of THE INSTITUTE and should avail themselves of the privilege of correspondence which is thereby given to them.

The AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE is the department of the University of Chicago through which all non-resident biblical and religious study is conducted. It may be addressed as follows: *The American Institute of Sacred Literature, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.*

Any person who has conscientiously followed the instructions of this course, may send answers to the questions following each study, thus applying for a certificate for the course. A fee of fifty cents is required.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

[This course can be satisfactorily accomplished without supplementary reading, but for the benefit of those who wish to read further this list is given.]

Bousset: *What Is Religion?*

Marti: *The Religion of the Old Testament.*

Sabatier: *Outline of a Philosophy of Religion.*

Clarke: *Sixty Years with the Bible.*

Dods: *The Bible: Its Nature and Inspiration.*

Jones: *Social Law in the Spiritual World.*

Mathews: *Spiritual Interpretation of History.*

Youtz: *The Enlarging Conception of God.*

Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience.*

Clarke: *Can I Believe in God the Father?*

Faunce: *What Does Christianity Mean?* (Especially Lecture II, "The Meaning of God.")

Hermann: *The Christian's Communion with God.*

Stevens: *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation.*

Rauschenbusch: *A Theology for the Social Gospel.*

Clarke: *The Ideal of Jesus.*

Peabody: *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character.*

Fosdick: *The Meaning of Faith.*

Fosdick: *The Assurance of Immortality.*

INTRODUCTION

Religion is a personal experience. We often think of it as a system of doctrines to be learned, or as a form of worship. But neither doctrine nor worship has any meaning unless a personal experience is thereby expressed.

In this course we shall be studying religion as a personal experience. We shall try to see how some of the great religious utterances of men of the Bible, as well as of men in Christian history, are expressions of the questionings, the hopes, and the convictions of persons who were trying to find the meaning of the experiences through which they were led.

Religious experience consists in the attempt to relate the events of one's life to the great spiritual forces in the universe, and thereby to ennoble, strengthen, and consecrate life in vital communion with God's purposes. Often the religious man is perplexed. He does not know what God's purposes are. He has to think over his experiences and find something which suggests a way of prayer and trust. If we once see that it is this quest for God which makes religion vital, we shall be prepared to understand why religious doctrines vary so much in content from age to age. It is because the problems of experience vary. The religious significance of any belief must always be sought in the experience which the belief interprets rather than in the content of doctrine as such.

The result of such a study as this will be twofold. On the one hand, we shall be inspired and stimulated by the religious experiences of others; on the other hand, we shall see that a vital religion for us is to be attained, not by any mere repetition of what other men have said, but by the relating of our own experience to God in ways which are honest and genuine for us. To share the spiritual aspirations of great religious souls is better than merely to repeat their doctrines.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

- Study I. Religion as a Personal Experience.
- Study II. Inspiration and Revelation.
- Study III. The Meaning of God in Experience.
- Study IV. The Meaning of Salvation.
- Study V. Christian Living.
- Study VI. The Future Hope.

STUDY I

RELIGION AS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

First day.—§ 1. Read Judg., chap. 5. This is one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew literature. It is a triumphal ode celebrating the defeat of the Canaanites. What is the poet thankful for in vs. 2? What does he think Jehovah did for Israel (vss. 4, 5, 13, 20)? What conception of God is revealed in vss. 23, 31? Note that this song comes from a people whose pressing problem was the contest with a dangerous enemy. Would you call their religion practical? What kind of help did such religion give them? The characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism or repetition rather than rhyme. It will help you to understand this poem if you appreciate beforehand the fact that one line is frequently but the repetition of the thought of the preceding line in another form.

Second day.—§ 2. What religious expectation did Saul have when he first sought Samuel (I Sam. 9:5-10)? Consider the religious experience involved in the anointing (9:25; 10:1). Note Saul's liability to religious enthusiasm (10:9-13; 19:24; 11:6). How was this explained in those times? Note also his tendency to melancholy, attributed to an evil spirit (16:14; 18:10-12).

Third day.—Read I Sam., chap. 15. Consider the bloody nature of the command given by the prophet. Why did Saul save some of the spoil? Note that the sin was a failure to obey implicitly. What kind of religion calls for absolute obedience to arbitrary demands? Were there finer possibilities in a religion which could have the noble passage, vs. 22?

Fourth day.—Read I Sam. 22:3, 5; 23:2, 4, 9-12; 25:39; 30:8. With regard to each of these passages consider what David expected his religion to do for him. Note how practical and material was the help expected. Read 26:19-20. It was thought that Jehovah might arbitrarily influence men, but he could be persuaded to desist. Also it was thought that if a Hebrew left Israel he moved away from the jurisdiction of Jehovah. Read II Sam. 12:1-7. What deeper view of God's interest in righteousness is here found?

Fifth day.—Read II Sam., chap. 24. This incident again presents a God whose anger is arbitrary and dangerous, and yet there is a beautiful confidence in his mercy (vs. 14.) We are not sure whether David wrote any psalms, so we shall not make use of them in estimating his religion. On the basis of all the passages studied consider how far this early religion was a kind of bargain with God and how far it was a spiritual fellowship.

Sixth day.—Read I Kings 22:1-23. What is Micaiah's idea of the way in which Jehovah achieves his ends? If a nation should organize its diplomacy through such lying messengers as these that the prophet imagines are engaged to do Jehovah's bidding, how should we think of it today? Micaiah is evidently a noble man ready to suffer for conscience' sake, but the religion which helps him to live his brave life finds no difficulty with deception.

Seventh day.—The material heretofore studied comes from the time before the great ethical prophets arose. It represents a religious experience of a somewhat materialistic type and yet with some distinctly higher elements gradually developing. Note (1) how simple and direct is God's interest in the world of human affairs; (2) how definite and practical is the assistance which men think they can get from God; (3) that God generally expects some kind of payment for his favors; (4) that God is thought of as using diplomatic means to achieve his ends such as would not seem moral to us. Compare these points with your own religious experience.

Eighth day.—§ 3. We pass over more than a century during which the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and others have spoken out of deeper religious experience. But the people tend to prefer the old materialistic religion, which seems more business-like. Read Jer. 7:1-11. Jeremiah is speaking to a people very much concerned to be religious in this practical way. Verse 4 indicates their confidence that the temple will always stand. What are the conditions upon which Jeremiah believes the divine favor can be secured? What actual conditions does he find among the people? What then does Jeremiah believe is God's chief concern?

Ninth day.—Read Jer. 18:1-11. Picture the striking scene in the potter's shop. What does the figure of the clay imply as to Jeremiah's idea of God's control over human affairs? Note that the people were quoting previous prophecies regarding the security of Israel and the destruction of other nations. These promises had been given by Isaiah and others as an encouragement to patriotism and righteousness. But Jeremiah insists that God never gives unconditional promises.

Tenth day.—Read Jer. 14:11, 12; 15:1-3; 25:8-11. These words imply Jeremiah's conviction that the political situation in Judah was hopeless. He sees the inevitableness of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar. But why does he think Nebuchadrezzar will come? Who is the real actor in the awful calamity? How did Jeremiah harmonize his religion and his patriotism? Imagine a righteous preacher in Turkey today: could he be a patriot? What would he have to tell the wicked Ottoman rulers?

Eleventh day.—Read Jer., chap. 34. Consider how a patriot prophet would feel with the enemy actually laying siege to the capital. He faces the facts and finds God in them. Note the endeavor of the people to curry favor with God by

releasing the slaves, then re-enslaving them as soon as the enemy had withdrawn. How did Jeremiah interpret God's attitude toward such conduct?

Twelfth day.—Read Jer. 31:27, 28; 32:36-44. What was Jeremiah's hope for his people? On what did he base it? What does this imply regarding Jehovah's relation to the nations?

Thirteenth day.—Think over Jeremiah's experience and try to estimate what his religion did for him in helping him to solve his life-problems. It is probable that he was the only man in Jerusalem who got any meaning out of the confused events of his time. He was sure that there was a moral order in the universe. He found this in regarding every event as the direct act of Jehovah. We are more accustomed to think of the operation of cause and effect in material and political affairs. Consider then how your own religion helps you to meet and interpret the great calamities of life.

Fourteenth day.—§ 4. Jeremiah's sad task was to prepare his people for the Babylonian captivity. He interpreted it as a divine chastisement. A later prophet, whose writings became attached to those of the old prophet Isaiah, sought to prepare the people for a return to Palestine. He had a new thought of Israel as the Servant of Jehovah. Read Isa. 41:8-10; 44:21-23; 49:1-4. How warm and confident is the prophet's sense of God's care! What did he think was Israel's work?

Fifteenth day.—Read Isa. 49:5, 6; 42:1-9. The thought changes. The prophet sees that not all Israel is fit to be the chosen Servant, but only the best of Israel. The Servant is that righteous part of Israel through which the wicked part can be saved. What is the Servant now to do? Is the blessing to be confined to Israel? We see the prophets coming to a sense of God's universal love. This prophet is seeking to solve the difficult problem of the suffering of the righteous in this world. He finds the solution in God's wider purpose of love.

Sixteenth day.—§ 5. Recalling that still further centuries have passed, read Matt. 5:38-48; 6:25-34; 7:12. Think of these words as expressing Jesus' own personal experience. Try to picture his life at Nazareth lived according to these principles. How would such a religious attitude toward men affect his daily life as a son, brother, neighbor, workman? What would be his temper and disposition if he lived with God utterly free from anxiety? On what ground did he feel that he could be thus free? Compare this attitude with that of the prophets toward God's providence. Consider your own social and religious life in comparison with that of Jesus.

Seventeenth day.—Read Luke 4:1-13. The actual experience of Jesus in the temptation is not easy to follow. It is given to us in parable form. Consider that he was just about to enter upon his life-mission: it would be fraught with personal peril and might be accomplished by different means, not all of them of the highest. What general principles did he follow? What was his feeling of God's relation to his life-work? Could you distinguish between what men

sometimes call practical and what Jesus regarded as worth while? Note how absolutely sure he was that God was with him in his work and that there was a right way to carry it on.

Eighteenth day.—Read Mark 10:13-16; Luke 19:1-10. What was Jesus' view of God's estimate of children? Has this any bearing on the fundamental nature of religious experience? Can a child be religious? How much intellectual accuracy of thought is necessary to be a Christian? What did Jesus do in order to make Zacchaeus a disciple? What evidence of conversion did the chief publican give? What did Jesus think of the evidence? What did religion mean to Zacchaeus after meeting Jesus? From Jesus' attitude toward children and toward a sinner we see his faith that man can live in fellowship with God. This faith in man is part of his religious experience.

Nineteenth day.—Read Matt. 26:36-46. What were Jesus' feelings as he went into Gethsemane? What was the real purpose of his prayer? What faith does his prayer imply? Consider the various temptations to which Jesus was then subject—some of them very subtle. He was seeking most of all to know God's will. How far does such an attitude enable one to discern duty? Why did Jesus regain his calmness after the prayer? Consider the religious experience of a courage based on the confidence that you are performing the highest possible duty, which has been made clear to you through a complete dependence on God.

Twentieth day.—We have studied the religious experiences of soldiers of the early Hebrew time more than a thousand years B.C., of various of the prophets of the intervening centuries, and of Jesus. Notice that to all of them religion was a practical help in meeting their problems. The difference in the religious experience lies in the different kinds of help that each man needed and sought. Think through this long development and see if you can discern a deepening of experience as time went on. Compare your own practical experience of religion with that of these characters.

Twenty-first day.—§ 6. St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) was one of the greatest men in the history of Christianity. For years he tried vainly to find religious satisfaction, but was finally led marvelously into the consciousness of God's forgiving love. Study carefully the following prayer of his:

O Lord, help us to turn and seek thee; for thou hast not forsaken thy creatures as we have forsaken thee, our Creator. Let us turn and seek thee, for we know thou art here in our hearts, when we confess to thee, when we cast ourselves on thee, and weep in thy bosom, after all our rugged ways; and thou dost gently wipe away our tears, and we weep the more for joy; because thou, Lord, who madest us, dost remake and comfort us.

Twenty-second day.—Where did Augustine find God? Why was it so long before he found God? What did God's presence mean to Augustine? Can you see how this particular kind of a prayer grew out of a real experience?

Twenty-third day.—§ 7. St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) was a romantic young soldier, happy, generous, adventurous, and winsome. His life was changed by a vision, and he carried over into his Christian life the spirit of romance and adventure, taking “lady poverty” as his bride, making humility and obedience to Christ beautiful acts of loyalty, and lavishing generous love on birds and animals as well as on his fellow-men. Read carefully the following utterances of his:

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon and the stars that thou hast made bright and precious and beautiful. Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind, and for the air and cloud and the clear sky and for all weathers through which thou givest sustenance to thy creatures. Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water, that is very useful and humble and precious and chaste. Be praised, my Lord, for Sister, Our Mother Earth, that doth cherish and keep us, and produces various fruits with coloured flowers and the grass. Be praised, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of thee, and endure sickness and tribulation; blessed are they who endure in peace; for by thee, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Twenty-fourth day.—How did St. Francis feel toward the moon and the wind and other familiar things? Was this feeling religious? If so, why? Did St. Francis’ temperament have anything to do with his religion? Compare this expression of religion with that of St. Augustine (twenty-first day).

Twenty-fifth day.—§ 8. The great poet, Milton, was smitten with blindness, and thus prevented from many activities in which he longed to engage. How can a blind and helpless man be religious? Read the following lines from one of his sonnets:

Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I fondly ask:—But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies; God doth not need
Either man’s work, or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o’er land and ocean without rest—
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Twenty-sixth day.—What difference did Milton’s blindness make in his religious life? What conception of God helped him to find religious satisfaction? Do you think that the last line of the poem would be an appropriate expression of religion for a strong and self-confident religious worker? Can you see how intimately this utterance is related to Milton’s experience?

Twenty-seventh day.—§ 9. Lord Tennyson lost a very dear friend by death, and the catastrophe was a challenge to his faith. In his great poem, *In Memoriam*, he faced the black challenge and found a religious answer. Read the following lines:

Our little systems have their day:
 They have their day and cease to be;
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith; we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Twenty-eighth day.—Is it possible to be religious when one is compelled to doubt? Could Tennyson formulate a very positive creed? What is there religious about the sentiment of these lines? Compare this kind of religious experience with that of St. Francis (twenty-third day). Could Tennyson have expressed himself honestly in the words of St. Francis?

Twenty-ninth day.—§ 10. Abraham Lincoln, after four years of responsibility during the terrible Civil War, in his second inaugural address spoke as follows:

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him?

Do you think a man like Lincoln could carry on a great war without feeling that it had a religious meaning? What was this meaning? Could the war end with any compromise on the slavery question? What would be the effect of any such compromise on religious faith?

Thirtieth day.—Lincoln's inaugural address concludes with these words:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Notice the precise things to which Lincoln pledges himself. Were these things suggested by the circumstances which he faced? Is it a good kind of religion which he professes? Compare this sentiment with that of Deborah (first day), and see how the content of religion has changed in the course of the centuries.

Thirty-first day.—§ 11. On the occasion of America's entrance into the great world-war in April, 1917, President Wilson voiced the ideal of a new kind of world which this nation might help to make—a world in which all nations should have

equal rights and equal responsibilities on a basis of justice, and where predatory warfare should be outlawed. Said he:

We are glad to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included, for the rights of nations great and small, and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. . . . We have no selfish ends to serve. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.

President Wilson's message to Congress, December 4, 1917, reiterating this noble, humanitarian ideal, closed with the words:

A supreme moment of history has come. The eyes of the people have been opened and they see. The hand of God is laid upon the nations. He will show them his favor, I devoutly believe, only if they rise to the clear heights of his own justice and mercy.

What is the difference between a war in which one nation seeks to crush others for its own advantage and a war waged for the liberation of all nations from evil habits of jealousy and greed? How did President Wilson's ideal grow out of his experience as responsible head of the United States? Put in your own words the standard to which God summons nations as it is suggested in the second quotation. Is there as real religion in this utterance as in Deborah's song? As you compare the two, do you find any evidence that religion itself becomes purer and nobler because of centuries of religious striving?

What an amazing variety in religious ideals we find in the utterances which we have studied! Deborah's barbaric song of triumph seems to have almost nothing in common with Lincoln's "with malice toward none and with charity for all," or with President Wilson's ideal of a world with equal rights for all peoples.

Perhaps one who surveys these religious utterances will at first be impressed with the thought that if such different and even contradictory ideas are sanctioned by religion not much is to be hoped for in the way of definite standards. But a more sympathetic study will reveal the fact that in every instance the religious person is relating his life with its profound experiences to the living God. The things most real to him are so important that he wants to feel the power and the purpose of God in these events.

It is precisely this which makes religion vital. Just because Deborah without reserve sought God's blessing on a military triumph she was doing the thing which made possible a religious testing of her ideals. Down through the centuries the men who have honestly and passionately sought to relate their precious experiences to God have learned more of God's character and purpose, until today we are the grateful heirs of a rich and varied human quest for God with all that has been learned from that quest. If we today would be genuinely religious, we must not be content with merely repeating familiar doctrines; we, too, must seek with all

our might to relate the great experiences of our life and of our age to God, that we may learn his purposes concerning us.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Give two or three important descriptive words which seem to you to express the spirit of the song of Deborah.
2. Describe what might be called Saul's religious views.
3. Since Samuel and Saul were contemporaries, why was Samuel's idea of God different from and higher than that of Saul?
4. Is it David's religion which prompts his reply to Nathan (II Sam. 12:5, 6)? If so, how do you account for other statements which show David to have been savage and cruel? Estimate David's religion on the basis of the history.
5. Give evidences of the sense of security or permanency which pervaded Israel in the time of Jeremiah's early ministry.
6. Why was Jeremiah alone filled with gloomy forebodings?
7. How did the parable of the Clay and the Potter express Jeremiah's idea of God in history?
8. Why is it right to call Jeremiah a patriot, and what was his hope for his people?
9. How fully do we today believe that a country founded upon justice and righteousness will endure while others fall?
10. Was religion weakened or strengthened by the changes in the course of history from Deborah to Jeremiah?
11. Is our ideal of righteousness the same as that of Jeremiah?
12. Which prophet cited gives us the great ideal of service as an element of religion?
13. What changes of emphasis came to our religion through Jesus' direction of his teaching toward individual rather than national conduct?
14. Can a nation move except as an organized group of individuals?
15. (a) What was Jesus' method of meeting temptation?
(b) How did he discern duty?
(c) How did his conception of God appear in his conduct?
(d) What did he get out of his religion?
16. What was the particular aspect of God which gave St. Augustine the greatest satisfaction? Why?
17. What were the characteristics of St. Francis' religion? Why?
18. What experience of the poet Milton threw emphasis upon patience and inactivity as an expression of religion?
19. What was Tennyson's religious problem?
20. Describe the religion of a modern statesman as seen in Lincoln.

STUDY II

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION.

INTRODUCTION

It cannot be too often stated that the reality of religion is discovered in profound experiences. In this course we are endeavoring to come face to face with some of the utterances which express in various ways the reality which religious men feel. In some instances this feeling is so intense and the consciousness of intimate contact with great spiritual forces is so strong that men act and think under the compulsion of these forces. This is what is meant by inspiration. The discernment of truth or duty which comes from such an experience is a revelation.

It is especially important to study such a subject as that of inspiration by the historical method. To find out just how a biblical writer was enabled to say what he did, or to observe just what a person's experience of inspiration was in a given instance, should give, if studied in a sufficient number of cases, an appreciation of the meaning of inspiration. As Professor William Newton Clarke once said, "The Bible is inspired as it is inspired, not as we may think it should be."

This month's study will bring us face to face with some of the salient facts which must be taken into account in any theory of inspiration.

EXAMPLES OF INSPIRATION

First day.—§ 12. One of the very old Hebrew narratives is the story of Samson in Judg., chaps. 14, 15, 16. It represents very early religious ideas. Read the whole story, noting especially 14:1-4, 19; 15:14; 16:20. This is a case of a man inspired to act. The *rage* of the hero is thought of as the sudden coming of the spirit of Jehovah. The earliest prophets were men who went into *religious ecstasy*, which was interpreted as divine inspiration. This is clear in the case of Saul. Read I Sam. 9:27—10:13, noting 10:5, 6, 9-13. The inspiration seems to have been contagious, even coming upon the messengers as in 19:18-24. One may see similar phenomena in certain modern religious sects.

Second day.—§ 13. Read I Kings 22:1-40. This is a very significant episode in the history of the idea of inspiration. Note that the prophets are expected to be able to predict the outcome of the war. Zedekiah and his companions declare with apparent sincerity that Jehovah has commanded them to encourage Ahab. Micaiah does not deny their inspiration, but affirms that Jehovah inspired them

falsely in order to accomplish his purpose. Micaiah further believes that God has revealed to him the whole operation.

Third day.—§ 14. Read Isa. 6:1-13. This is a vision. Note that the physical elements in the picture must have been those with which Isaiah was familiar—the king's throne, the royal robe with trailing skirts, the winged figures in the temple, the altar, the tongs, and the burning coals. A young man of moral and spiritual insight had an intense impression of a call to the duty of preaching to his careless countrymen. He shrank from the duty, feeling himself unworthy, but he became convinced that God could make him a fit messenger. The religious experience became so intense as to take pictorial form in his imagination in the vision. Has this inspiration a higher ethical significance than the impulse of Samson?

Fourth day.—Read Jer. 19:14, 15; 20:1-11. Jeremiah felt compelled to tell his people that devastation awaited them. It was an awful message. It seemed to his people treasonable, and he was severely punished. He was the most hated and reviled man in Jerusalem (vss. 7, 8). He would have been glad to be silent, yet the inner conviction of duty was so great that he continued his severe preaching. In prayer to God he protested against this necessity. Note the feeling of the prophet that he is under a compulsion (vss. 7, 9). Yet he is so sure that he is speaking God's message that he expects vindication (vs. 11).

Fifth day.—§ 15. Read I Cor. 14:1-4, 13-19. This chapter gives a very interesting picture of the behavior of Christians living five hundred years later than Jeremiah, who had an experience of inspiration which enabled them to speak with "tongues." Note that the experience was full of religious meaning for the inspired man (vs. 2). Was his inspired utterance, which no one else could understand, valuable to others? "Prophesying" was not as spectacular an experience, for here the message was readily understood. How does Paul value the inspiration of one who speaks with tongues? Does this suggest that the *content of the message* is quite as important as the kind of "inspiration" which accompanies it? If the inspired utterances given in a "tongue" had been phonetically recorded, of what value would they be to us today?

Sixth day.—§ 16. There is a book of visions and precepts called *The Shepherd of Hermas* which was very popular in the early church. A portion of it is included in one of the oldest existing manuscripts of the New Testament. It is commended for religious reading in the oldest extant list of biblical books (the so-called Muratorian Canon). The author tells in great detail how he was inspired to write the book. "The spirit carried me away and took me through a pathless place, through which a man could not travel, for it was situated in the midst of rocks." After reaching a plain the author saw the heavens opened, and a woman rebuked him for his sins. After she had vanished and he was brooding in despair another woman appeared "arrayed in a splendid robe, and with a book in her hand." She asked him, "Do you wish to hear me read?" To which he replied, "Lady, I do"

"Listen, then," said she, "and give ear to the glories of God." Hermas tells us that he "heard from her magnificently and admirably things which my memory could not retain." About a year later he tells us, "Again the spirit carried me away, and took me to the same place where I had been the year before." This time the heavenly visitor gave him the book, which he "transcribed letter by letter" without understanding what it meant. "Fifteen days after," he tells us, "when I had fasted and prayed much to the Lord the knowledge of the writing was revealed to me." Notice how explicit are the details of Hermas' inspiration.

Seventh day.—Read Revelation 1:10-20. Compare John's experience with that of Hermas. John's Revelation is included in our New Testament. Hermas' revelation is not. Are the two experiences essentially different? There are some New Testament books (for instance, the Gospels) for which the writers make no explicit claim to inspiration. Are these as inspiring to you as the Book of Revelation?

INSPIRED AND INSPIRING UTTERANCES

Eighth day.—§ 17. Read Amos 7:10-15. Amos was a Judean farmer who had gone north to preach in Bethel. The priest was offended that he should speak against the northern government, and told him to go back home and get the fees of a prophet there. Amos protested that he was not one of the professional prophets (like those whom Saul met), but a farmer whom God had sent to speak a message. As we read the whole book of Amos we realize that the social injustice of the day had so impressed him that he felt impelled to denounce it (note 8:4-8). This is an instance of the revelation of social duty to an earnest soul.

Ninth day.—Read Mic. 6:6-8. This has been called the high-water mark of the Old Testament. It is the declaration of the essentials of religion. The prophet lived among people who were most anxious to secure the favor of God. They would pay any amount of money for sacrifices. They would even slay their first-born sons, esteemed the supreme possession. The prophet views the religious practices of his time and finds them without value. They do not make better citizens, they do not conduce to noble living, they do not develop healthy religious experience. He therefore dares to affirm that God cares only for justice and kindness in human relations and simple fellowship of man with himself. This is divine revelation, but it comes as spiritual insight rather than as an ecstatic vision.

Tenth day.—§ 18. Read Ps. 23. How did the psalmist know that God is the shepherd? Could this poem have been written by a man who had not had the experience of the Divine care? The hymn "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" is evidently founded upon this psalm. But could not the religious experience of the modern hymn writer have inspired his lines? The revelation here is in the experience of confidence. The psalmist's poem stirs one more deeply for the very

reason that he used the familiar pastoral imagery of his countryside, the figures of speech that were natural to him.

Eleventh day.—Read Ps. 137. It is a wonderful lyric. Note the passionate and plaintive patriotism of the Exile (vss. 1-6). Then there is the sudden change of feeling as Edom, hated Edom, is cursed (vs. 7). The psalm closes with the terrible hope that Babylon shall see the brains of her infants dashed out against the rocks, requiting the atrocities committed against the Jew by their Babylonian captors (vss. 8, 9). A French priest after the invasion by Germany in 1914 said that France did not wish to repeat the German barbarities, but to forgive them. The Jewish psalmist wanted justice, torture for torture; the Frenchman would bring peace to the world, overcoming evil with good. God reveals himself to men under the limitations of their experience. Had this modern Frenchman a fuller revelation of God than the Jews in Babylonia?

Twelfth day.—§ 19. Read Luke 18:9-14. Consider how Jesus found truth: did he dwell apart from men and receive truth from God, or did he interpret the life that was about him? This parable would indicate that he found truth in the common experiences of contact with men. Where had Jesus seen the effect of a proud and bigoted religious spirit? How did he know that prayer of self-congratulation would destroy genuine fellowship with God? Where had he seen the results of penitence? How then would you estimate the revelation that is in this parable?

Thirteenth day.—Read Luke 15:11-32. The supreme teaching of Jesus was that men could be saved by love. Imagine how he may have tried this out in his own life at Nazareth. May he ever have seen a prodigal redeemed by forgiveness? Do you recall any instance of his own similar treatment of wrongdoers? How did Jesus find out that God's method of saving men is by love? That supreme revelation of the nature of God came to Jesus through experience and is given by him to us through an appeal to our own experience of fatherly love. Would it be enough to say that Scripture is inspired when it is inspiring?

Fourteenth day.—§ 20. Read I Cor., chap. 13. Here is an inspired utterance of highest value. Read it as a part of Paul's entire argument and appeal in chaps. 12-14. Christians in Corinth were competing with one another for experiences of inspiration and were disputing as to the relative values of inspired gifts. See chap. 12:8-10, 15-25; review your study of chap. 14 (fifth day). Paul here declares that the spirit of love which leads a man to forget self-interest because of the larger vision of God's purpose is better than any of the popular experiences of inspiration. Read 12:31 as the introduction to chap. 13. Was Paul's experience with the Christians whom he had observed a source of this wonderful description of love? Notice that there is no such claim of special revelation here as we find in Rev. 1:10 ff., or in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (see sixth and seventh days). The message is due to Paul's practical desire to enable earnest, but somewhat fanatical, religious men to experience a kind of devotion which unites rather than separates

people. The inspiration of Paul's message here is less spectacular than speaking with tongues. Which is religiously more valuable (vs. 1) ?

Fifteenth day—§ 21. Martin Luther, while still a loyal Catholic, had vigorously attacked certain abuses and wrongs which officials of the church were apparently sanctioning. Eventually he was brought to trial before the Emperor and compelled to say whether he would recant in order to be loyal to the church, or would defy the church in order to be true to conscience. It was a terrible dilemma. Luther's decision is one of the great utterances in Christian history. "It is impossible for me to recant unless I am proved to be in the wrong by the testimony of Scripture, or by evident reasoning. I cannot trust either the decisions of Councils or of Popes, for it is plain that they have contradicted each other. My conscience is bound to the word of God, and it is neither safe nor honest to act against one's conscience. God help me. Amen." Compare Luther's experience with that of Jeremiah (fourth day). Notice how both were constrained by an inner necessity to utterances which involved apparent disloyalty to what men generally believed to be divinely established institutions. Jeremiah insisted that righteousness was more sacred than the temple, Luther that honest righteousness was more sacred than the Catholic church. Jeremiah made possible a new kind of religious devotion. So did Luther. Is the inspiration of Luther essentially different from that of Jeremiah? If we compare the content of their messages, Jeremiah's, God's judgment on Jerusalem and Judah, and Luther's, the freedom of the Christian from ecclesiastical domination, which is more immediately practical in modern life?

Sixteenth day.—§ 22. George Matheson (1842-1906) was a brilliant Scottish preacher who became blind in his twentieth year. His writings were full of insight into the religious perplexities of modern men. Almost every hymn book contains his wonderful hymn, "Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." Study carefully these two stanzas:

O Light that followest all the way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy Sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee,
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Matheson's blindness compelled him to seek a more intimate and trustful relation to God. One can feel how his experience gives spiritual profundity to the hymn. Read it entire in your hymn book. Do the great hymns that we sing as well as the utterances of Scripture reveal to us the meaning of the Christian life?

Seventeenth day.—§ 23. In 1897 occurred the magnificent celebration in England of the sixtieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria. Troops from every British colony marched in a glorious military procession. The great navy was assembled showing thirty miles of ships. The proud consciousness of the greatness of the Empire thrilled all Englishmen. At this time Kipling wrote his famous "Recessional." Three stanzas are given here. Read the poem entire if you have access to it.

God of our fathers, known of old,
 Lord of our far-flung battle line,
 Beneath whose awful hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.

The trumpet and the shouting dies;
 The captains and the kings depart;
 Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard,
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And guarding calls not Thee to guard,
 For frantic boast and foolish word,
 Thy mercy on thy people, Lord.

In view of the Boer war which followed in two years, and the great European war which began in 1914, these words may well be compared with some of the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament. Re-express the thought of these stanzas in your own words and raise the question whether it would furnish a text for a timely sermon today. It is a direct and powerful revelation of the dangers connected with unrestrained national pride.

THE TESTING OF INSPIRATION

Eighteenth day.—§ 24. Religious teachers often speak of progressive revelation, by which they mean that God gave a certain body of truth to each age, and that in order to get the whole truth we need only to add all the partial truths together. Thus some would find proof texts in any part of the Bible. But truth cannot be cut into slices like a loaf of bread. We do not correct our old astronomy by mere additions. We change our conceptions. This process of rectifying the beliefs of the past is seen to be going on in the Bible itself. Thus Isaiah, when the Assyrian armies were approaching the city (30:19, 31; 31:5; 37:35), held that Jerusalem would be preserved as the city of God; but Micah, a contemporary prophet, believed that it would be destroyed for its wickedness (3:12). When the popular

prophets of a later day reaffirmed Isaiah's confidence Jeremiah denounced them as false prophets (Jer. 14:13, 14; 23:16, 17). Jeremiah was not reflecting discredit upon Isaiah, but was expressing his own convictions in a later century.

Nineteenth day.—§ 25. Jesus found great inspiration in the Old Testament. Read Luke 4:1-12 and Deut. 8:3; 6:16; also Mark 12:28-31; Deut. 6:4; Lev. 19:18. But Jesus saw that the conception of the authority of the Old Testament held by the scribes prevented men from moral and spiritual insight. He clearly saw that the Old Testament was in many respects ethically deficient. In the Sermon on the Mount, while he insisted that he had not come to destroy the old tradition (Matt. 5:17), he yet as clearly superseded what he regarded as inadequate (Matt. 5:21, 22, 27, 28, 38, 39).

Twentieth day.—If one never asks critical questions regarding the teaching of the Bible one may fail to respond to higher moral ideals. In the matter of divorce Jesus regarded the Mosaic Law as unsatisfactory. Read Mark 10:1-12 and Deut. 24:13. With great insight he pointed out that the ancient law was suited to the age in which it was given, but was not expressive of God's purpose for men. In the matter of the Sabbath Jesus definitely broke with the old legalism. Read Num. 15:32-36 and Mark 2:23-28 and consider the wide difference of spirit that is manifested.

Twenty-first day.—§ 26. The first Christians were Jews. Circumcision was the ancient sign of God's covenant with them. Jesus had received it and had never hinted that it should be given up. How an ardent missionary of the first century must raise the question of the authority of the Scriptures is illustrated in the Epistle to the Galatians, which is concerned with Paul's contention that the Old Testament ceremonial was not binding on a gentile Christian. On what basis could he thus set aside the Scripture? There was not a line of the New Testament yet written, so Paul was setting his own judgment against the only Scripture which the church possessed. He based his new teaching upon religious experience. If a man's life is changed by faith there can be no absolute requirement of a ceremonial. Read Gal. 2:16; 3:1-3, 26; 5:1-6.

Twenty-second day.—Consider what a responsibility Paul's doctrine of religious freedom implies. The people who were following the Scripture literally thought that he was a dangerous innovator. His free use of older revelation is very far-reaching. Read Gal. 4:9, 10; 3:24, 25. But note that he finds his justification in God's blessing upon his ministry (2:9), in his own experience (1:11, 12), and in the glorious effect of true spiritual liberty (5:13-25).

Twenty-third day.—§ 27. Martin Luther found that people could engage in endless debates if they simply went to the Bible for proof texts. To Luther the Word of God was a living message, redeeming and inspiring, not a mere external authority. In his *Preface to the New Testament* he wrote, "Christ is the Master. The Scriptures are the Servant. Here is a true touchstone for testing all the books; the

book which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, were St. Peter or St. Paul its writer. On the other hand, the book which preaches Christ is apostolic, were its author Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod." Think over carefully what is involved in this test of inspiration. Which ought to be valued more highly, the imprecatory part of Ps. 137 (eleventh day), or Matheson's hymn (sixteenth day)?

Twenty-fourth day.—§ 28. Calvin in his famous *Institutes* (Book I, chap. viii) gave eloquent expression to the vital conception of inspiration. "For as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men until it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same spirit that spake by the mouths of the prophets should penetrate into our hearts to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them." Calvin insists that the inspiration of the Bible must be tested by the religious experience of every Christian. When one reads the Bible there must be an inner conviction of its power. The Holy Spirit must confirm Scripture. If we apply this test will all utterances of the Bible prove to be equally inspired? Are there some utterances outside the Bible to which the inner spirit of a Christian responds?

Twenty-fifth day.—§ 29. Coleridge, an influential English writer (1772-1834), said, "In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together. . . . The words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit." Compare this test with the one proposed by Calvin. If the Bible is so inspiring that it "finds" a man at the depths of his being can there be any higher testimony to its inspiration? Has your experience been like that of Coleridge?

Twenty-sixth day.—Review the studies thus far made and see whether you can formulate any statement of inspiration which will cover all the facts. Notice particularly that some of the inspiring passages quoted are from the Bible, others are outside the Bible. Is our religious life richer for knowing and using all these passages?

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

Twenty-seventh day.—§ 30. The word "canon" as applied to the Bible means that this collection of books has been decided upon as authoritative as contrasted with all other books valuable as these may be. There are certain facts which should always be recognized in our thought of the Bible. The Bible is, strictly speaking, not a book. It is a whole library of books written by different men, at different times, and for different purposes. Each book was written to inspire and edify people who were having certain definite experiences because of definite conditions. The value of a book depended upon its fitness to meet specific needs. Its value to us will depend upon whether we have similar needs. Is there any difference in value to us between the book of Leviticus and the Gospel of John?

Twenty-eighth day.—Collections of valuable books for religious instruction and guidance were made from time to time both in Judaism and in Christianity. Eventually a standard collection was decided upon—the Old Testament in Judaism, the New Testament which Christianity added to the Old Testament. In selecting the books the history of the canon shows that the line was inevitably drawn at a somewhat arbitrary place. The so-called apocryphal books of the Old Testament were favored by some and rejected by others. The exact limits of the New Testament were uncertain for a long time. We have seen how *The Shepherd of Hermas* lays claim to inspiration, and that a portion of it is actually bound up in one of the oldest known manuscripts of the New Testament. In view of these facts we cannot set biblical books entirely apart from all others. They are rather superlative examples of a religious literature with many shades of value. Have you ever read the apocryphal books of the Old Testament? If not read one or more of them and form your own judgment of their religious value. You will then appreciate the problems of those who decided what books should go into the Bible.

Twenty-ninth day.—Read Luke 1:1-4 and see what method Luke used in writing his Gospel. Is his method essentially different from that which would be employed by a man today in writing a life of Jesus? No one of the four Gospels explicitly claims to be an inspired writing. Why should these be in the New Testament while a good book definitely claiming inspiration, as *Hermas*, is left out?

Thirtieth day.—The Bible is a collection of records of religious experiences of many kinds. Men of rude culture as well as men with high spiritual ideals may feel themselves inspired. The deeds and words of men, even in times of exaltation, will reveal the limitations of their normal life. Samson felt inspired to deeds of great physical strength, although his moral character was far from admirable. The false prophets felt inspired to proclaim a narrow and blind patriotism. Jeremiah, with a deeper insight into the political events of his day, felt inspired to rebuke them. The early Christians enjoyed the ecstasy of speaking with tongues. Paul, with the inspiration of the Christian ideal of loving service to others, uttered his wonderful description of love. Some men, like the author of the Book of Revelation or *Hermas*, were conscious of a special revelation from a heavenly source. Others, like the authors of the Gospels, were conscious of a great opportunity to tell what they had learned about Jesus and his saving power. This opportunity was their inspiration.

The study of these various kinds of inspiration should lead us to see that religion is too varied and far-reaching to be limited to any one age or culture. Inspiration is too great a thing to be exactly defined. The Bible is a means of enlarging our appreciation of religion, not a limitation placed upon it. In thinking over the studies of this month does it seem to you that the highest type of inspired message came from men who were capable of the greatest self-sacrifice; that in fact the Christlike character affords the most favorable channel

for the revelation of God to men? Should this inspire us to strive to attain to that likeness to Christ which will make us able to discern God's will? Is that what Jesus meant when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the dictionary definition of the word "inspiration"?
2. By this definition can we say that Samson was inspired and that acts committed under the influence of artificially created frenzy were inspired?
3. What part does frenzy seem to have played in the inspiration of Samson and the earlier prophets?
4. Do you see any reason why Micaiah predicted an unfavorable, and the other prophets a favorable, outcome of the battle with Syria?
5. What elements material and spiritual entered into the vision of Isaiah?
6. Describe in Jeremiah's words the compulsion under which he spoke his messages.
7. By what standard did Paul value the forms of inspiration which were manifested by the early Christians?
8. What is it that makes the messages of Amos and Micah more valuable than those of the earlier prophets?
- 9a. How is the life-experience of the writer of Ps. 23 reflected in his poetry?
- 9b. How in Psalm 137?
10. Name other instances than those given by the author of occasions upon which Jesus gave inspiring interpretation of common experiences.
11. Why did Paul make no claim to inspiration when he wrote I Cor., chap. 13?
12. What was Luther's dilemma and how did he meet it? Why did he act as he did?
13. Do you know some modern poem not mentioned by the author which teaches great spiritual truth? Give its name and the truth which it conveys to you.
14. What was the general attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament?
15. Give occasions upon which he manifested a critical attitude toward some of its laws.
16. How did Paul arrive at his wonderful gospel of freedom from the Jewish law?
17. What was the test of inspiration that Luther proposed?
18. On what ground did Paul break with the Old Testament legalism?
19. Luther and Calvin were both counted as heretics in their day. What is a heretic?
20. What great writers in the Bible and other literature have inspired you most?
21. What great lives in biblical and other history have inspired you most?

STUDY III

THE MEANING OF GOD IN EXPERIENCE

The word "God" stands for two quite different ideas.

In the first place "God" is a philosophical term to designate the ultimate reality upon which everything depends. God, so conceived, is the "First Cause," the "Absolute," mysterious, vast, incomprehensible, always hidden from us by the world, accessible only by long and elaborate arguments.

But there is a second meaning to the word "God" which is characteristic of religious experience. Here God is a spiritual companion, speaking directly to man's heart, strengthening and comforting and inspiring. We reason about the philosopher's God. We *pray* to the God of religious experience.

In this study we are concerned to see what God means in religious experience. When the mysterious and vast power which orders and sustains the universe is felt as a spiritual presence in one's inner life wonderful things occur. The religious man finds a glory and a moral purpose in the world. Dark places are illumined. Instead of feeling dismayed and oppressed by the vastness of the universe, as man comes to know that it is his spiritual home where loving companionship may be found, life takes on new dignity. The movements of history are seen to be pointing to great moral ends. To know God gives a new kind of confidence and joy.

For convenience' sake we shall consider three general aspects of the realization of God in experience: (1) God as the Lord of the universe; (2) God as the Providence guiding human history; (3) God as the companion of the inner life.

GOD AS THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

First day—§ 31. Forget for a moment all that you know about astronomy, geology, and biology. Imagine yourself living in a time when men thought the world a flat disk a few hundred miles in diameter with water all about it. They thought also that many gods had produced the various elements and forms of life. In that state of mind read Gen. 1:1—2:4. What does it make you think about God? Consider how you would feel in a universe thus wonderfully formed. What then was the experience of God that produced this chapter?

Second day.—§ 32. Read Job, chap. 38. The Book of Job represents the struggle of a soul with the awful problem of suffering. In the preceding chapters Job's friends have told him that he is being punished for sin and he has rejected the theory with indignation. He grows angry as his friends offer their little common-

place explanations. At last in this chapter the Lord speaks to Job out of the storm. He explains nothing, but reveals the wonders of the universe, asking Job if he can understand them. The poor sufferer is calmed and repents that he ever doubted the great Providence that cares for all things (42:5, 6). He gained comfort, courage, patience, from his experience of God in meditating upon the meaning of the universe. Is there anything like this in your own contemplation of nature?

Third day.—§ 33. Read Ps. 8. Think of the Psalmist as looking up to the starry heavens. What thought of God comes to him? Read Ps. 19:1-6. What does the contemplation of the wonder of the sun do for the singer? Read Addison's hymn, "The Spacious Firmament on High." (Consult any good hymn book.) What experience does this bring to you?

Fourth day.—Read Ps. 147. The Psalmist is happy to think that the wonderful God who is administering the universe is also guiding the destinies of his people. How safe this made him feel! Can we think of the orderly processes of nature with something of the same feeling? Do you have any religious experience in your contemplation of nature?

Fifth day.—§ 34. Read Matt. 6:25-34. What message came to Jesus from the flowers and birds? Think of the whole passage as reflecting his own experience of triumph over anxiety and confidence in God who knows all about our needs. The translation "take no thought" is unfortunate; it should be "do not worry." Turn to St. Francis' beautiful utterance in Study I, sec. 7, and compare it with this utterance of Jesus.

Sixth day.—§ 35. Did you ever think what life would be like if we could not depend upon the faithfulness of nature's laws? if we could not be sure of recurring seasons, of rain and sunshine, of growth of crops, of the regularity of the operation of the laws of gravitation? This orderliness of nature is one aspect of God's control. It is especially evident in the majestic, silent sweep of the stars. The astronomer Kepler, overcome by the significance of the invariable laws which he had discovered guiding the motion of the stars, exclaimed, "I do think God's thoughts after him." The following utterance of his shows what it means to realize that the universe is God's creation: "The Wisdom of the Lord is infinite, as are also his glory and his power. Ye heavens, sing his praises: Sun, moon and planets, glorify him in your ineffable language! Praise him, celestial harmonies, and all ye who can comprehend them! And thou, my soul, praise thy creator! It is by him and in him that all exist."

Have you ever experienced the overwhelming sense of awe which comes from realization of the immensity of the universe in a starlit night? Would Kepler's utterance give one a sense of companionship with the stars? Compare it with Ps. 8 and with Ps. 148 as well as with the great hymn, "The Spacious Firmament on High."

Seventh day.—§ 36. Tennyson's poem, "The Higher Pantheism," is an eloquent portrayal of the alternating moods which the world creates in us. We *feel* that there must be a heavenly glory, radiant and wonderful; but it is hard always to be *sure* of it. A portion of the poem is given here. Read the entire poem if you can.

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the vision of him who reigns?
Dark is the world to thee: Thyself is the reason why;
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?
Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and gloom.
Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

If there is a divine spirit moving in nature would you be able to know that fact without some longing for companionship? Is the faith which leads one to this quest a necessary means of realizing the presence of God? In the last couplet quoted notice how near God is when one ventures in faith to try to talk with God.

Eighth day.—Not only the immensity of nature but also the marvel of delicate beauty suggests the presence of God. Study Tennyson's exquisite lines:

Flower in the crannied wall
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all in my hand
Little flower;—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Compare with this Wordsworth's:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears.

When you think of the wonderful process by which a flower blooms, are you not very close to the divine presence? Would our experience of God be richer if we gave more attention to the beauties of nature? Notice that Tennyson says "if." Recall by way of contrast the clear certainty of Jesus in Matt. 6:25-34.

Ninth day.—Review the work of the previous eight days and make a list of ways in which men may find God in nature. We are inclined to limit our religious experience to what we find in church or in conventional ways of worship. The great religious spirits of the Bible lived much out of doors. Jesus taught in the open air. Would not our experience of God be greatly deepened if we were to cultivate a spiritual acquaintance with nature?

GOD AS THE PROVIDENCE GUIDING HUMAN HISTORY

Tenth day.—§ 37. One of the most important aspects of religious experience is a faith that God is guiding the events of history. Even in war and distress the religious man may thus be filled with glowing ardor.

Read Isa. 10:5-23. This oration was spoken in Jerusalem when the invading Assyrians were sweeping down upon the land. Isaiah believes that he can see God's intention to punish Judah for her sins. But he condemns the cruel enemy who has forgotten that he is the instrument of God. We may not feel able to speak so definitely as did the prophet of the meaning of these historic events, but we do feel that the march of human history shows the working of a great righteousness; so the destruction of the Assyrians was interpreted (Isa. 37:36). The incident seems to have inspired Ps. 46, and that in turn Luther's hymn *Ein' feste Burg*. Read these poems and consider the experience of God reflected in them.

Eleventh day.—§ 38. Read Deut. 28:1-25. This solemn message is an effort to make an ethical interpretation of history—the performance of national duty brings national blessing. We today should not put the matter so definitely perhaps. But does not our faith in the divine justice in human affairs give us comfort and courage and the basis for a genuine optimism?

Twelfth day.—§ 39. Read Dan. 2:31-45. The image is intended to represent in its different metals the great empires down to the time when Antiochus, the king of Syria, was trying to destroy the Jews. The writer who lived in this latter time tells the striking story of the past in order to comfort his people with the faith that the climax of the great human drama is at hand. God is about to inaugurate a new and righteous kingdom. A little persecuted people might well believe that only God could save them. But we with our blessed opportunities of making the world better should not slavishly adopt their thought. We exhibit our faith, not by indulging in speculations about the "end of the world," but in honest effort to work with God for an ever better world.

God did not intervene in history in exactly the way in which this prophet expected; but his faith is a noble inspiration to all who are eager for a better kind of world.

Thirteenth day.—§ 40. Read Heb., chap. 11, the roll of honor of the Hebrew heroes. How did these men live thus heroically? By their faith in God; note vs. 27. The mightiest influence to keep men true, courageous, ready to consecrate themselves and to die for a future which they will not live to see is the faith that God has a great enterprise on hand in which they are participants. Note Heb. 11:40 and 12:1 which express the uplifting power of feeling that one is an active participant in the providential making of history.

Fourteenth day.—§ 41. It is entirely possible for men to be profound believers in the guidance of God in history and yet to be mistaken in their conception of

God's actual purposes. Read Jer., chaps. 27, 28. Hananiah is sure that God will deliver his people from foreign dominion within two years. Jeremiah is equally sure that God purposes national disaster. Hananiah's confidence seems at first sight to be a glorious faith. To doubt his prophecy seemed like distrusting God's power. But to provide an exact program for God is precarious. If God acts otherwise, what becomes of one's faith?

Fifteenth day.—Ever since the time of Hananiah there have been zealous men who have thought to make God's guidance of history perfectly clear and definite by assigning precise ways and dates for the divine providence. Read Dan. 9:24-27 for an example of such precision. Events never occurred as here predicted. Fanciful "interpretations" of this passage at the hands of visionary idealists abound in Christian history. But curious calculations of numbers and dates may be made by one who has no deep experience of God. The truly humble man will acknowledge ignorance where he does not know and seek to learn God's ways by closer communion with him. Read Mark 13:28-32, noting especially vs. 32.

Sixteenth day.—§ 42. Another way in which men often misinterpret God's purposes in history is the assumption that those purposes are to be wrought exclusively through one nation or one institution. Patriotism at such times may express itself in God's name but may breathe a spirit of narrow pride. An example of this is found in Zech. 14:9-21. Read this carefully and ask yourself whether the spirit of vs. 17 is in accord with Jesus' teaching in Matt. 5:43-45. By way of contrast read the wonderful prophecy of international fellowship in Isa. 19:23-25. If Zechariah's conception were to prevail, could there be any recognition of God's leadership among Christians who do not go to Jerusalem to worship? A German educator in July, 1917, said: "The whole history of the world is neither more nor less than a preparation for the time when it shall please God to allow the affairs of the universe to be in German hands." How would you criticize this utterance? Would the criticism be equally valid if for the word "German" were substituted the word "Jewish," or "American," or "Catholic," or "Protestant"?

Seventeenth day.—§ 43. In the days of Queen Mary of England there was great confusion of religious ideals. Should England return to Catholicism or should it remain Protestant? If the latter, what kind of Protestantism should be adopted? Bishop Hugh Latimer was one of the noble leaders who believed that a better spiritual apprehension of God's word was more important than political scheming. He was burned at the stake in Oxford, October 16, 1555, in company with Ridley. As the fire was kindled he called out: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out." If one is conscious of living close to God, suffering and even martyrdom may be seen as a way in which God achieves great purposes in human history. Can you name any other martyrs who thus found

significance in their death? Read Heb. 12:2, and put in your own words the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death.

Eighteenth day.—§ 44. Study Leonard Bacon's well-known hymn, the first two stanzas of which read:

O God, beneath whose guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
And when they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and praise they worshipped thee.
Thou heardest, well pleased, the song, the prayer.
Thy blessing came; and still its power
Shall onward, through all ages, bear
The memory of that holy hour.

In what ways was the consciousness of God's guidance a religious force in the lives of the Pilgrims? Does our knowledge of their faith help us today to realize God's presence in our national life? Put in your own words the religious meaning of the story of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Nineteenth day.—Review the work of the last nine days and notice how the presence of God in human history is necessarily conceived in terms of a particular crisis. An *experience* of God is quite different from a general philosophy of providential guidance. Try to imagine the experience of Isaiah, of the author of Deuteronomy, of the author of the Book of Daniel, of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, of Hananiah, of Zechariah, of a modern German, of Latimer, of an American today. Does such a survey help you to an experience of your own? What does it suggest as to the magnitude of God's purposes?

GOD AS THE COMPANION OF THE INNER LIFE

Twentieth day.—§ 45. Read Ps. 139. Note how intimate is the sense of God. The Psalmist feels an awe in the august universal presence, yet he rejoices in it (vss. 23, 24). This song comes out of a deep experience of divine companionship. Read it as a personal expression of your own feeling. Perhaps if we knew the facts some black iniquity would account for vss. 19-22.

Twenty-first day.—Read Pss. 42, 43. It seems to be an exile's song. He is in trouble, taunted by his enemies. He remembers the happy days when he could worship without hindrance. Still he is sure of God, and full of hope. Consider how greatly the experience of God has to do with comfort. Do we know what it is to "thirst for God" (42:1, 2)?

Twenty-second day.—§ 46. Read Jer. 15:15-21. Perhaps of all the prophets Jeremiah had the hardest task. He had to preach a message to people who hated him for his warning words. Often in his intensely personal book he tells us how he prayed, and how his prayer was answered. Note his complaint (vss. 17, 18),

his stern joy in his duty (vs. 16), his confidence that God will be with him in the work (vs. 20).

Twenty-third day.—§ 47. In connection with our first study in this series you read the story of the temptation of Jesus. Read again Matt. 4:1-11, a parable of Jesus' struggle over the difficulties of his mission. Note his certainty that he could trust in God, his clear-cut decisions, his ability to see through specious excuses, his complete victory. Temptation came to an end, for it was no longer possible to a soul living in unbroken fellowship with God. What is your own experience of the relation of communion with God to moral victory?

Twenty-fourth day.—§ 48. Read John, chap. 17. Try to appreciate the experience which this prayer expresses. The sense of oneness with God (vss. 11, 21, 23, 25, 26), the sense of mission from God (vss. 4, 8, 18, 25), and the whole prayer, as the most intimate communion. How far is your own prayer a communion resulting in comfort, inner courage, peace, hope?

Twenty-fifth day.—§ 49. Read Rom. 8:26-39. Note the strong tone of confidence rising at last to exaltation. Here is a man perfectly sure of God. All circumstances are helpful (vs. 28), none of the things that dismay men can overcome him (vs. 35), spiritual victory is an abiding experience (vss. 37-39). This letter was written when many perils were about the apostle, but he is united with God and nothing can separate him from that supreme experience.

Twenty-sixth day.—§ 50. The most blessed experience of God is in a sense of personal companionship. Study these sentences from St. Augustine: "O God, thou hast made us for thyself; and our souls are restless until they find rest in thee. . . . I sought thee at a distance, and did not know that thou wast near. I sought thee abroad, and behold thou wast within me." An experience of God must be found by realizing the presence of God *within*. How would Augustine's words help one to this experience? Would prayer be better than speculation as a means of attaining it?

Twenty-seventh day.—§ 51. Study this prayer of James Martineau:

O God, thou only refuge of thy children, who remainest true, though all else should fail, and livest, though all else die, cover us now when we fly to thee, rebuke within us all immoderate desires, all unquiet temper, all presumptuous expectations, all ignoble self-indulgence, and feeling on us the embrace of thy fatherly hand, may we meekly and with courage go into the darkest ways of our pilgrimage, anxious not to change thy perfect will, but only to do and bear it bravely.

See if there is anything in your experience suggested by the words "refuge," "cover," "rebuke," "feeling," "do and bear." Does such a prayer as this tell us more or less about God than a theological argument?

Twenty-eighth day.—§ 52. Study the hymn beginning, "Abide with me: fast falls the eventide." It is in every good hymn book. Put in your own words the

experience of God suggested by the words, "help," "changest not," "guide and stay," "abide with me." How would life be strengthened by the sense of such companionship?

Twenty-ninth day.—Study Watt's great hymn: "O God, Our Help in Ages Past." Make a list of the important affirmations concerning God. Notice how the hymn transforms the meaning of the world and of human life by setting it against the background of the eternal power and love of God. Think what would be lost if one could not make these affirmations. In the light of this hymn does the meaning of God seem to be something which can be lightly passed over?

Thirtieth day.—Review the month's work, and from these studies and from your own experience write your own personal statement of what God means to you. If you will form the habit of putting these meanings into definite form in your prayers, you will find that it deepens your sense of the presence of God.

Thirty-first day.—An interesting testimony comes from the novelist, Mr. H. G. Wells, who is violently hostile to the Christianity of the churches, but who in his book, *God, the Invisible King*, has portrayed an intimate experience of God's presence. Says he:

It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in one's self. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to one's self, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but it is like standing side by side with and touching some one that we love very dearly and trust completely. . . . Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely, and has found a lover, like one who was perplexed, and has found a solution. One is assured that there is a power that fights with us against the confusion and evil within us and without. There comes into the heart an essential and enduring happiness and courage.

Mr. Wells's profound experience of God occurred outside the circle of church members. Does a Christian who is exclusive or narrow-minded realize the "wide-ness of God's mercy"?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Through what three channels may man experience God?
2. Describe Job's experience of God in the universe.
3. What besides its immensity suggests God in the universe?
4. Does the study of astronomy diminish or increase one's sense of God?
5. Name three psalms other than those in the study which show an experience of God through nature.
6. What part does faith play in our ability to respond to God in nature?
7. Give some references which show how closely Jesus associated God with nature.
8. How did Isaiah interpret God in the events of his times?

9. Do you agree or disagree with the writer of the Book of Deuteronomy in his theory that the performance of national duty always brings national prosperity?
10. What is the meaning of Dan. 2:31-35?
11. If we agree with Paul that we may participate with God in the making of history, what opportunity can we see in the present?
12. Name several men outside the Bible whom you think have so participated with God.
13. Against what tendencies should we guard in the interpretation of God in history?
14. Put in your own words the religious meaning of the Pilgrim Fathers.
15. In what qualities of personal communion does the writer of Pss. 139, 42, 43 find satisfaction?
16. What upheld Jeremiah in the hard tasks which he believed that God had given him to do?
17. Why did temptation have no power over Jesus?
18. What persuades us that the God of Jesus and of Paul is as close to us and as responsive to our needs as he was to theirs?
19. Of what value is it to study the religious experiences of men of the past?
20. What does God mean to you?

STUDY IV

THE MEANING OF SALVATION

We cannot too often remind ourselves that the realities of religion must be found in *experience*. This is especially true of that aspect of religion which is called "salvation." It is to be feared that many persons are needlessly perplexed because they think that they must inwardly appropriate some intricate explanation of salvation. In this study we shall not be speculating about election, or sanctification, or "theories" of atonement. We shall try to appreciate what actually occurs in the life of one who experiences salvation.

Men need salvation because there is something wrong with them which needs to be set right. But unless a person knows just what is wrong he will be groping in the dark for relief. No two persons need to be saved from exactly the same evil. One man may be generously inclined, kind to others, but perfectly willing to steal or to lie. Another man may be scrupulously honest, but cold and harsh toward others. To talk about sin in general may prevent one from seeing the particular sins which need attention. To strive for salvation in general may mean the neglect of special phases of religious experience. The student is urged to observe the suggestive aspects which will appear in the incidents and utterances of this study, so as to make his own conception of salvation more vital and real.

For convenience four aspects of the experience of salvation are here treated: (1) salvation from distress due to powerful human enemies; (2) salvation from personal sins and defects; (3) salvation from distress due to the heartlessness of nature; (4) social salvation.

SALVATION FROM DISTRESS DUE TO POWERFUL HUMAN ENEMIES

First day.—§ 53. Read Exod. 15:1-18. Note that this is a song of triumph intended to represent the exultation of the escaping Israelites whose enemies have been overwhelmed in the sea. The foe was cruel (vs. 9), but God was greater than the foe, and delivered his people. The sense of national salvation appears often in the Old Testament. It is not wanting in a certain self-satisfied monopoly of Jehovah's benefits, and it often has a spirit of vengeful joy. Read vs. 4, 5, 10, and 16. Yet there is also a noble realization of the vindication of justice. If some great calamity had fallen upon the German army of occupation in Belgium in 1914, how naturally such a song as that of Miriam's would be sung by the emancipated

people. The deliverance of France by Joan of Arc has always been celebrated as such a divine salvation. The Armenians who have been rescued from the Turkish massacres have given praise to God. For another striking instance read Isaiah, chaps. 36 and 37, and the songs which seem to celebrate that great deliverance, Pss. 46 and 47.

Second day.—§ 54. Read Dan., chap. 3. This is one of the very late Old Testament writings. It is a story with a religious purpose. The little book was circulated among the Jews when the Greek king of Syria was trying to destroy their religion and nationality. The miracle is a picturesque method of illustrating God's saving care of his people. How confident are the faithful that they will be saved (vs. 17), and yet how loyal, even though the salvation might not come (vs. 18). Read the whole story as a parable of loyalty in extremest peril and deliverance from overwhelming human tyranny. How applicable in the invaded lands of Europe during the Great War.

Third day.—§ 55. Read Isa. 11:1-9. The prophet is picturing a redeemed land after the foreign invader has been expelled. Note that he looks for a wise government, inspired by religious faith (vs. 2); that he expects justice for the poor and punishment for the oppressor (vs. 4); that righteousness holds the social order as a belt girds a man (vs. 5). Then the strong and the weak, the great and the small, are able to dwell together in peace (vss. 6-9). Here is a highly poetic picture of social salvation. It is the kind of salvation for which men are looking in the days that shall be after the war.

Fourth day.—§ 56. Read Isa. 42:1-9; 49:1-6. The prophet has promised to Israel, Jehovah's servant, a national deliverance from the power of Babylon. Then he indicates that only the faithful in Israel are really the servant. These by their loyalty shall be the means of saving their own people and also the Gentiles. Note how universal is the expectation of a salvation that shall preserve the feeblest and most needy (42:37), and shall extend to the ends of the earth (42:4, 6; 49:6). The salvation is social and political, founded in a new sense of justice, but it is distinctly the result of religious faith.

Fifth day.—§ 57. Read Isa. 52:13-53:12. In this wonderful passage the prophet symbolizes in a martyr figure all the sacrificial efforts that had been made by God's servants for the redemption of Israel. How Amos had been despised! How Jeremiah had been persecuted! How Ezekiel had been misunderstood! But all the loyalty would have its reward, for the stricken servant of Jehovah was to be exalted (52:13-15). Here is the classic expression of the way in which social salvation is achieved. Who believes the message (53:1, 2)? How easily the failure of the servant of God is regarded as his own fault (vs. 4). But later we find our mistake. Wendell Phillips is exalted today, but in his own day he was assaulted by a Boston mob. Nurse Edith Cavell was murdered, but her memory will live forever. Of course the early Christians applied the prophet's wonderful

picture to Jesus, for he met the hatred of the rulers, and went to death in dependence upon God, and robbed the cross forever of its shame.

SALVATION FROM PERSONAL SINS AND DEFECTS

Sixth day.—§ 58. In order to realize how various religious needs are, let us look at Mark's brief summary of typical saving acts in the ministry of Jesus. Read Mark 1:29—2:15. Notice how Jesus in each case dealt with a specific kind of trouble: sickness (1:29 ff.), possession by demons (1:32 ff.), need of hearing the gospel (vss. 35 ff.), need of forgiveness (2:5), social ostracism (vss. 15 ff.), religious conventionality (vss. 18 ff.). Jesus did not spend his time in constructing elaborate theological doctrines, as the scribes did. He dealt with people according to their actual needs. Do you think that it would be possible to define these needs in one stereotyped conception?

Seventh day.—§ 59. Read II Sam. 12:1—15. David had deliberately planned to get an officer of his army slain in battle so that he might marry the officer's beautiful wife. Notice how Nathan aroused David's moral sense by a parable. From what did David need to be saved? Did his repentance and forgiveness blot out all the consequences of his evil deed?

Eighth day.—§ 60. Read Isa. 1:10—20. The prophet is addressing men who are religious in conventional ways, worshiping and offering sacrifices. Do these religious men need salvation? If so, from what? How may they be saved? Which is more important, an outer transaction like a sacrifice, or an inward attitude of mind? Read vss. 13, 14, 16, 17. What kind of an experience would one have if he were saved as Isaiah suggests?

Ninth day.—§ 61. The book of Jonah furnishes a wonderfully suggestive study of the spiritual needs of a religious leader. Read it carefully. Jonah was called to be a foreign missionary. Nineveh was a heathen land. But he did not want these Gentiles to be put on an equality with his own people. Why was Jonah angry when God was merciful to the repentant Ninevites? Was he more concerned with his own reputation than with God's purpose? If so, from what did he need to be saved? Can you name some spiritual defects to which religious leaders are peculiarly liable?

Tenth day.—§ 62. Read Rom. 7:7—24. Paul is perhaps giving us a glimpse of his own experience in this passage. Notice that when he was trying to keep the commandments he found that coveting was forbidden. But coveting is an inner state of mind rather than an outer deed. Paul discovered that bad suggestions came to him involuntarily. So overwhelmed was he that he uttered the despairing cry in vss. 17—25. Compare with this passage Matt. 5:21 ff. If you measure yourself by this test do you realize a profound need of salvation?

Eleventh day.—Read Rom. 8:1—11. It is the sequel to the preceding utterance. Notice what occurs in experience because of trust in Christ: forgiveness (vs. 1),

a sense of spiritual freedom (vs. 2), a consciousness of the presence of God's spirit in one's inner life (vs. 9), and a certainty of possessing eternal life (vs. 11). Might one have such experiences without being able to understand all of Paul's doctrine of atonement in vs. 3?

Twelfth day.—§ 63. In order to realize one's need of salvation one must become conscious of his defects. Read Luke 18:9-14. Did the Pharisee need salvation? If so, from what? Could he be saved unless he was aware of his defects? Why did Jesus approve the publican rather than the Pharisee? Review the past five lessons and see if you can tell what kind of experience makes one ready for salvation.

Thirteenth day.—It is only when we come face to face with God's standard of judgment that we realize our sinfulness. Read Matt. 5:43-48. Make a list of the practical ways in which men become conscious of their sinfulness. What is the effect on you of knowing a consecrated Christian? Consider what it means by way of self-judgment to become acquainted with Jesus. Charles Dudley Warner tells us how when a boy he tried to induce in himself a profound sense of sin and could not succeed. Suppose instead of trying to feel sinful he had simply let the life and ideals of Jesus speak to him. A revelation of the good is more potent than a theory of sin in inducing a wholesome experience of religious need.

Fourteenth day.—§ 64. Repentance is the first active step in the experience of salvation. It means literally a change of purpose. Read Luke 15:11-32. What was more important in the prodigal's experience, remorse or the new purpose? May a person repent without going through an emotional crisis? F. W. Robertson said, "To grieve over sin is one thing; to repent is another." Have you ever known what it is to feel remorse, but to remain unrepentant? St. Ambrose said, "True repentance is to cease from sin." To be inspired by the summons of some noble ideal or some heroic life is the best way in which to repent in this sense. Do you think that people sometimes dwell too much on their own failures and too little on the power of God? Put in your own words what is involved in the experience of repentance.

Fifteenth day.—§ 65. A man is saved by faith. This means practically that he trusts himself to some revelation of God's power and love. This revelation comes usually in some fact or ideal which calls forth trust. Read Luke 11:9-13. Jesus calls attention to the children's trust in a father's love, and suggests that God is at least as good as an earthly parent. Read John 14:1-11. Here the argument is that God is as good as Jesus. If you were in trouble or were conscious of sin could you trust a person like Jesus and confess to him? Why? Would it be hard to have faith in him? When supreme goodness appears, faith is the most simple and honest attitude.

Sixteenth day.—§ 66. There are many ways in which faith is aroused. Sometimes it comes by reading great utterances of faith such as are found in the Bible. Sometimes one reasons out the grounds for trust. In Browning's *Saul* we find such an argument: "Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift, that I doubt his own love can compete with it?" Read this wonderful poem with this idea in mind. Compare Jesus' statement in Luke 11:13, "how much more." Martin Luther found the character of Jesus the surest ground for faith. Said he, "I let go utterly all thoughts and speculations concerning the divine majesty and glory, and hang and cling to the humanity of Christ; there is no fear there, but only friendliness and joy, and I learn thus through him to know the Father."

Seventeenth day.—Trying to believe a doctrine is not faith. There must be something in the doctrine which kindles one's vision and arouses love and aspiration. Far better than a doctrine as an object of faith is a life glowing with the consciousness of God, which compels us to acknowledge the existence of great spiritual realities. Why is the faith which Jesus arouses more complete than that coming from any other source? Put in your own words the results in experience of trusting Jesus.

Eighteenth day.—§ 67. Read I John 3:1-3. To be called children of God means a new sense of dignity. When Lord Nelson said, "England expects every man to do his duty," he appealed to the best in men. This appeal saved them from yielding to fear. Notice in vs. 3 how the consciousness of belonging to the family of God stirs one to purity of life. In vs. 2 the victorious joy of present experience is promise of a greater experience as a more intimate presence of God is realized.

SALVATION FROM DISTRESS DUE TO THE APPARENT HEARTLESSNESS OF NATURE

Nineteenth day.—§ 68. Read Job 23:1-9. Recall the disasters that had befallen Job, loss of property, death of his children, a loathsome disease which had afflicted him. Job is desperate. He wants to know the meaning of this dreadful experience. But he cannot find God. What would salvation mean for Job? Read chap. 27 and note that to Job the misfortune of the wicked would mean the justice of God.

Twentieth day.—§ 69. Read Eccles. 9:2-6. This strange book reflects the musings of one who finds that Nature seems to care nothing for moral distinctions. What difference does it make whether a man is good or bad, since both good and bad meet precisely the same fate? Compare with this utterance the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 5:43-45. Jesus states the same fact as the author of Ecclesiastes. What is the difference between the two interpretations?

Twenty-first day.—§ 70. Tennyson in his great poem *In Memoriam* has given eloquent expression to the overwhelming sense of loneliness which comes when one must face hopeless disaster:

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all
And faintly trust the larger hope.

Notice that here is a real need which is not sin. Is the attitude in the last stanza a step toward saving faith?

Twenty-second day.—§ 71. In the opening lines of *In Memoriam* Tennyson voices the faith that saves from despair:

Strong son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove,

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust,
Thou madest man, he knows not why:
He thinks he was not made to die,
And Thou hast made him. Thou art just.

In John 14:1-11, § 65, we saw how Jesus reassured the doubting disciples. Compare Tennyson's argument here. The "immortal love" seen in Jesus reinforces the natural conviction that there must be a moral meaning in the world. Indicate in your own way how faith in Jesus saves one from the kind of despair which we have been considering.

SOCIAL SALVATION

Twenty-third day.—§ 72. Read Isa. 65:17-25. Bear in mind what the people of Israel had suffered both from enemy invasion and from social injustice. God's reign cannot come to pass unless society is such as to help rather than to hinder spiritual life. Notice in vs. 21-23 how honest toil is to receive its just reward. By way of contrast with this ideal picture read Amos 3:12-15. A phrase which is common today is "the Social Gospel." What does it mean, and why is it needed as well as the gospel of individual salvation?

Twenty-fourth day.—§ 73. The idea of the Kingdom of God was prominent in the preaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus. Read Luke 3:3-14. Men are involved: generous care for those in need (vs. 11), elimination of "graft" in politics (vs. 13), getting rid of military arrogance (vs. 14).

Twenty-fifth day.—§ 74. Read Mark 10:35-45. The disciples were asking for appointment to positions where they could give orders to others. Jesus tells them that in the Kingdom of God only those had a right to rule who rendered largest service. What kind of a city would result if all the officials had the spirit suggested by this passage? To secure that kind of government is essential if all men are to be saved from graft and incompetency and injustice. President Cleveland said, "Public office is a public trust." Is this a religious interpretation of government?

Twenty-sixth day.—§ 75. The full realization of Christian brotherhood is impossible in a society where slavery exists. Thomas Jefferson said with reference to slavery in the United States, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." Harriet Beecher Stowe felt that she was obeying an inspired call when she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. To free this land from slavery was essential to the realization of all that Christianity means. Was the Emancipation Proclamation a part of the gospel of salvation? Read it with this idea in mind. Abraham Lincoln is called the "savior of his country." Why?

Twenty-seventh day.—Intemperance is another foe of the higher life. What do you think Jesus would say of a city which has saloons making drinking and debauchery as alluring as possible? Is the full gospel of salvation being preached if we pass by the social and political ideals which permit saloons legally to exist? Why do decent people prefer to live where there are no saloons? What do you know of conditions in your own town? Learn what you can of them today.

Twenty-eighth day.—At the present time the whole world is in the agony of an awful war (1918). Christian men who would be glad to practice the gospel of brotherly love are finding it necessary to train themselves for the slaughter of their fellow-men. Said one soldier in a training camp, "What kind of a Christian will I be after I have run a bayonet through a man?" Does this war make plain the need of a salvation for nations as well as for individuals? If slavery has gone and the traffic in alcohol is going, may we hope for the ultimate salvation of men from war?

Twenty-ninth day.—§ 76. The prophets of Israel looked forward to a righteous nation. The early Christians with their Jewish brethren pictured the fulfilment of salvation in the Kingdom of God. In our day we are giving new emphasis to this aspect of faith. Read Felix Adler's hymn beginning,

Sing we of the Golden City
Mentioned in the legends old,
Everlasting light shines o'er it,
Wondrous tales of it are told.

Only righteous men and women
Dwell within its gleaming wall;
Wrong is banished from its borders
Justice reigns supreme o'er all.

Do some men need to be saved from indifference to social and political conditions more than from personal sins? What of church members who did not work for the abolition of slavery, who did not fight the liquor traffic, who shout more loudly for big armies than for international justice?

Thirtieth day.—Review the studies of this month, and then write a brief statement telling what salvation means in its broadest aspects. Is there danger that we may be satisfied with a partial salvation, and so may miss a portion of the blessing which may be ours?

One of the results of this study should be the realization that salvation is a far greater and more varied experience than that of a dramatic rescue from the power of sin. Indeed, some of the most consecrated Christians are too busy about deeds of love and justice to give much thought to their own selfish salvation. One may have his life transformed by Jesus through active service no less than through a more passive trust in him. In Matt. 22:44 ff. Jesus pictures some men who are surprised to learn of their complete identification with him. To love what Jesus loved, and to do what Jesus would have done, is the surest test of salvation. In comparison all else is incidental.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why is it better to get our conception of salvation through the experience of people than from the theories of religious philosophers?
2. Give some examples from Old Testament history of what might be called national salvation.
3. What is there about all these examples that makes them evidences of religious experience?
4. What part did the personal attitude of those saved play in the salvation?
5. What was Jesus' method of saving the people about him, as illustrated in Mark, chapters 1 and 2?
6. Give Old Testament examples of people who were saved from themselves.
7. What relation does Isaiah declare between repentance and salvation?
8. Name some spiritual defects to which religious leaders are peculiarly liable.
9. How did Paul express his feeling of his own need of salvation?
10. What must precede repentance, and therefore salvation?
11. How do men become conscious of their sinfulness?
12. Put in your own words what is involved in an experience of repentance.
13. What does salvation by faith mean?
14. Why should it not be difficult to have faith in God?
15. Why is the faith that Jesus inspires more complete than any other?
16. What effect upon us has the consciousness of belonging to the family of God?
17. How does faith in Jesus save one from the despair which comes from fruitless struggle with disease or misfortune?
18. What is meant by "social salvation"? What is its importance compared with individual salvation?
19. Make a list of ten things from which it seems to you that society needs to be saved.

STUDY V

CHRISTIAN LIVING

The full meaning of Christian faith is to be found only as we see how that faith may become a constant power in all realms of life. While the more conspicuous aspects of religion, such as public worship, impressive creeds, striking experiences of conversion, prayer, Bible-reading, and the like are of real importance, yet, after all, men ultimately judge a Christian by the way in which he lives among his neighbors rather than by merely formal religious acts.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about the Christian religion is its power to transform and ennoble apparently commonplace details of life. To give a cup of cold water in the spirit of Christian discipleship is to receive the approval of Jesus. In this study we shall try to appreciate some of the fundamental aspects of Christian living. We shall first consider certain general principles, and then pass to specific Christian virtues and graces.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH JESUS

First day.—§ 77. One of the great gains coming from the modern historical method of studying the Bible is a fresh discovery of Jesus. Too frequently Christians have spent more energy in discussing abstruse theories concerning the "nature" of Christ than in becoming acquainted with Jesus himself. Read Mark 12:41-44. Jesus called attention to *inner values*, where men were accustomed to emphasize external deeds. How would acquaintance with Jesus affect one's attitude toward people too poor to count for much financially?

Second day.—§ 78. Read Luke 7:36-50. Remember that the Pharisees prided themselves on maintaining an exclusive society with high standards of behavior. What was the difference between their attitude toward the sinful woman and the attitude of Jesus? What effect would acquaintance with Jesus have on persons given to class prejudice? Is there especial need today for this influence of Jesus on our life?

Third day.—§ 79. Read John 15:9-15. What kind of relation between Jesus and his disciples is here emphasized? Can a Christian satisfy this ideal if he does not enter into a profound friendship with Jesus? Is it enough to engage in formal worship of Jesus without the spiritual communion here depicted?

Fourth day.—§ 80. The apostle Paul found the secret of spiritual power and joy in a wonderfully intimate communion with Christ. Read Rom. 8:35-39, and

Gal. 2:20. What did Paul find in the character and work of Christ that gave him such triumphant joy? Would Paul have thought a Christian life complete without this experience of spiritual friendship?

Fifth day.—§ 81. Richard Watson Gilder has pictured a man in the second century, not knowing exactly how to define Christ's nature, but captivated by the character of Jesus:

If Jesus Christ be man and only man, I say
That of all mankind I will follow Him, and will follow him alway.
If Jesus Christ be God, and the Only God, I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell, the earth and sea and air.

If one is not able to state a theological conviction concerning Jesus, may one nevertheless enter into the joy of acquaintanceship? Would such acquaintanceship be a good way to find out what to believe concerning Jesus?

Sixth day.—St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) found that the surest way in which to realize the love of God was to let Jesus teach him. Said he:

Observe that the heart's love is partly carnal; it is affected through the flesh of Christ and what he said and did while in the flesh. Filled with this love, the heart is readily touched by discourse upon his words and acts. . . . I deem the principal reason why the invisible God wished to be seen in the flesh, and as man hold intercourse with men, was that he might draw the affections of carnal men, who could only love carnally, to a salutary love of his flesh, and then on to a spiritual love.

Acquaintance with Jesus keeps one's relation to God from becoming vague and indefinite. Study St. Bernard's great hymn (found in any good hymn book) beginning, "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts." Make a list of the definite spiritual gains which St. Bernard here mentions as coming from a loving friendship with Jesus.

Seventh day.—Review the previous six studies and make a statement of your own, indicating what an acquaintanceship with Jesus brings into one's life. From your own knowledge of the Gospels select some incident in Jesus' life which means much to you, and carefully define what it means. Would our Christianity be richer or poorer if we were to attach less importance to doctrines *about* Jesus and more to personal acquaintance *with* Jesus?

LOYALTY TO GOD'S PURPOSE

Eighth day.—§ 82. Read Luke 12:16–21. Note the suggestive phrase, "rich toward God." Jesus was poor in this world's goods, but how rich he was toward God! Compare Matt. 6:19–21. How would such a relation to Jesus as that expounded in the previous days' studies help one to become rich toward God?

Ninth day.—§ 83. Read Mark 12:28–34. These two commandments of Jesus sum up the whole of Christian living. The various words used in vs. 30 are

probably loosely used in order to emphasize complete devotion. But it is profitable to consider what is involved in a love which is not simply an emotion of the heart or a vague act of the "soul," but which demands the activity of one's *mind* and the employment of one's *strength*. Is a man "rich toward God" if he gives less serious thought to his religious life than to his business? What would be the difference between a "strong" Christian and a weak one?

God loves men. If a man is actually rich toward God, what will his attitude be toward his fellow-men? Why is the second commandment (vs. 31) a necessary consequence of the first?

Tenth day.—§ 84. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) is the most famous theologian of mediaeval times. His works are to this day the basis of Roman Catholic theology. Study carefully the following prayer of his:

Grant me, I beseech thee, Almighty and most Merciful God, fervently to desire, wisely to search out, and perfectly to fulfil, all that is well pleasing to thee. Order thou my worldly condition to the glory of thy name; and, of all that thou requirest me to do, grant me the knowledge, the desire, and the ability that I may so fulfil it as I ought; and may my path to thee, I pray, be safe, straightforward, and perfect to the end.

Compare this with the "great commandment" of Jesus just studied. Notice especially the three things involved in devotion to the will of God—a fervent desire, a wise inquiry, and a practical activity. Genuine love demands careful thinking and active service as well as a right emotion.

CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Eleventh day.—§ 85. Jesus' teaching was not a mere general exhortation to individuals. He constantly called attention to the Kingdom of God, in which his followers might find full satisfaction. Read Matt. 7:21-23, and notice that Jesus expects his followers to pass a definite test. What is the nature of the test? What is the meaning of the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? The Kingdom of God means a society in which God's will shall be done. The Christian will be as eager for the realization of that society as he will be for personal purity of life.

Twelfth day.—§ 86. Read Matt. 20:20-28. How is one to attain a high place in the Kingdom? Jesus declared that membership in the Kingdom was conditioned on the possession of a life-purpose like his. He explicitly showed what that purpose was. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister." When a mother ministers to her baby's needs everyone recognizes the beauty of her life. Is there anything finer than to see a loving son or daughter tenderly caring for an aged parent? A few years ago a crippled newsboy in Gary, Indiana, became a hero by giving a large portion of his skin to be grafted on the body of a girl who had been terribly burned. The boy himself died. If every Christian were to have the spirit of ministry, would the Kingdom of God be realized?

Thirteenth day.—§ 87. Read the following and put in your own words the qualities of life demanded of a citizen of the Kingdom: Matt. 5:3, 19-20; 18:1-4; 19:23-26; 25:1-30. Are these the qualities that we ordinarily put first in our thought of the Christian life?

Fourteenth day.—Professor William Newton Clarke said: "A world that fulfilled the ideal of God's Kingdom would be a world in which men helped one another; and certainly the ideal would not draw any limits to the field of help, or confine helpful activities to any particular class of services from man to man. In his Kingdom God has not drawn any such lines of limitation or restriction." If this correctly expresses the spirit of Christian living, how would the Kingdom of God come in family relationships? in business? in politics? in international relationships? Says Rauschenbush, "The Kingdom of God is humanity organized according to the will of God." What practical meaning should a Christian find in the petition "Thy Kingdom come," in the Lord's Prayer?

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES AND GRACES

Fifteenth day.—§ 88. We have seen that Christian living means intimate friendship with Jesus, loyalty to God's purpose, and citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Out of these primary relations grow the characteristic virtues and graces of the Christian life. George Herbert wrote in the seventeenth century:

Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

Notice that it is the *inner motive* which gives to the action its value. Compare Jesus' valuation of the cup of cold water given "in the name of a disciple" (Matt. 10:42).

Sixteenth day.—§ 89. Read Gal. 5:13, 14; and I Cor., chap. 8. How will a Christian exercise his unquestionable rights? Paul was entirely free to disregard foolish scruples concerning meat offered to idols. But as a Christian he could not disregard the effect of his action on other men (I Cor. 8:10-13). A certain man who had a large sum of money in a bank was privately informed beforehand that the bank would shortly fail. He had a right to withdraw his money any time. He decided to let it remain in the bank and to share the fate of all depositors rather than to gain a selfish personal advantage. What made his action fine?

Seventeenth day.—§ 90. In his poem "A Glance behind the Curtain," James Russell Lowell represents Cromwell arguing whether it is not better to sail to New England in order to be free from tyranny. Cromwell decides to remain in England for a more unselfish task. Lowell makes him say:

What should we do in that small colony
Of pinched fanatics, who would rather choose
Freedom to clip an inch more from their hair
Than the great chance of setting England free?

Which is more important for a Christian, to attain personal freedom or to submit to limitations for the sake of helping others? When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, England perhaps had the technical right to remain aloof. Which would be more in accord with Christian ideals—to keep out of war at any price or to enlist for the sake of helping Belgium maintain her freedom?

Eighteenth day.—§ 91. At the opposite extreme from the ideal of unrestrained freedom is the ideal of extreme asceticism, where one seeks to be religious by painful self-denial. St. Simeon Stylites (390–459) lived for thirty years on top of a pillar, never once descending, devoting all his time to religious devotion and to preaching. His was an abnormally “simple life.” But he was dependent on his disciples to furnish what meager food and clothing he needed. Would you regard him as a good example of Christian living? If not, why not? Self-denial must be helpful to others exactly as freedom must be helpful to others.

Nineteenth day.—§ 92. Read Mark 2:15–20. Which did Jesus consider more important, his own reputation for strict piety, or the welfare of people, even if these latter were “publicans and sinners”? If fasting makes one’s relations to other people strained, is fasting a Christian virtue? “According to Jesus,” says Professor W. N. Clarke, “self-denial is always for a purpose. It is never for its own sake.” Compare the formal observance of meatless Fridays in Lent with the informal restrictions on food caused by the Great War. Is the latter as genuine an expression of Christian living as the former?

Twentieth day.—§ 93. Read Mark 7:1–23. Christian living involves a careful scrutiny of religious habits in order to be sure that one is maintaining fellowship with Jesus. Why are the scribes and the Pharisees condemned by Jesus? Can you name any modern religious habits which might stand in the way of a more spiritual life? Read Phil. 4:8, and in the light of this indicate the shortcomings of a man who thinks only of the externals of religion.

Twenty-first day.—§ 94. Most Christians must devote the greater part of their time to what are sometimes called “secular” pursuits—housekeeping, farming, working in stores or factories, and the like. Jesus was a layman, and his teachings are largely interpretations of the experiences of laymen. Read Luke 14:1–6; 15:3–32, as examples of a Christian valuation of everyday occupations. Is solicitude for the comfort and safety of farm animals an expression of Christian living? Is a father’s natural affection for his son a Christian virtue?

Twenty-second day.—§ 95. Read Matt. 6:19–33. In striking, picturesque language Jesus insists that a Christian must not let worldly interests and occupations withdraw his affections from God’s Kingdom. What is the difference in moral value between a miserly love for money and a love for domestic animals? Does the latter tend to make one helpful, while the former does not? Put in your own words the conception of food and clothing which one would have if he were a

citizen of the Kingdom of God, i.e., if he were concerned with these in such a way as to be helpful toward others.

Twenty-third day.—Taking the tests of Christian living which have been discussed—fellowship with Jesus, loyalty to God's purpose, citizenship in the Kingdom of God—what ideals ought to dominate a Christian business man? Can he live as a Christian if his business harms rather than helps people? Why is gambling unchristian? Is it a Christian thing to invest money simply for the purpose of getting the largest financial returns?

Twenty-fourth day.—If an employee works simply for the largest wages possible, is he expressing a Christian spirit? How would the spirit of helpfulness lead a clerk to treat customers? Would such a Christian spirit make one a better clerk from a business point of view? Martin Luther, in one of his sermons, told the house servants to sweep and cook just as if Jesus were coming to be a guest in the house. Would work be spiritually significant if it were done in such a way as to win Jesus' approval?

Twenty-fifth day.—William Wilberforce (1759-1833) consecrated his Christian life to the endeavor to secure the abolition of the slave trade by England. He saw that the institution of slavery made impossible those relationships of helpfulness which belong to the Kingdom of God. Christian living made it imperative for him to labor for social changes. Today Christian living is leading to aggressive attempts to change the laws and customs relating to the sale of alcoholic drinks. Why does Christian experience stimulate social reforms? Can a Christian soldier today feel satisfied unless he has a burning passion to change the political conditions and traditions which lead to war?

Twenty-sixth day.—§ 96. Read Eph. 3:14-21. The apostle Paul had been through many hard experiences. He had encountered suspicion and hostility on the part of Jews, he had unflinchingly undertaken a stupendous missionary task, he had met with discouragements, and spent his last days as a prisoner. But this prayer of his reveals the consciousness of inexhaustible inner strength and joy. What it means to be "rich toward God" is eloquently set forth. Adoniram Judson, the pioneer missionary from America to Asia, spent seven weary years in Burmah before making a single convert. Yet he said, "I do not know that I shall live to see a single convert, but I feel that I would not leave my present situation to be a king." What gave to Paul and to Judson their triumphant optimism?

Twenty-seventh day.—§ 97. An unknown poet in the seventeenth century wrote:

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha
 Will never save thy soul,
 The cross in thine own heart
 Alone can make thee whole.

Hold thou! where runnest thou?
 Know heaven is in thee
 Seek'st thou for God elsewhere,
 His face thou'lt never see.

Christian living means the inner personal possession of God, so that one may share the life of God in every experience.

Twenty-eighth day.—§ 98. Read I Cor., chap. 13. Jesus defined Christian living in terms of love to God and to man. Study carefully the list of achievements which are due to love (vss. 4-7), and picture the character of a man thus endowed. Would such a man reveal a spiritual relationship to an unseen source of power? How would fellowship with Christ make possible such inner resources?

Twenty-ninth day.—§ 99. Study Washington Gladden's hymn beginning "O Master, let me walk with thee," and make a list of the results there suggested of such fellowship with Jesus.

This month's study should make it clear that the most essential aspect of Christian living is the experience of an uplifting and strengthening relationship to the divine power revealed in Jesus. To the man who is not a Christian, life often seems so full of hardships and stern duties that it yields little surplus joy and satisfaction. The Christian faces such hardships and tasks with the consciousness of being reinforced by God's purpose and love. It is easy to let religion sink to the level of mere duties and to miss the best thing about Christianity, viz., a wonderful friendship with Jesus which brings the power and presence of God into daily life. Never was this kind of Christian living more needed than in the perplexing and distressing times in which we live.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. In the estimation of Jesus, which was more important, formal religious devotion or acts of service?
2. Describe Jesus' attitude toward different classes of society.
3. Is a friendship with Jesus possible for those who have not seen him in the flesh?
4. What is meant by being "rich toward God"?
5. How do you think the condition of being "rich toward God" compares in satisfaction with that of possessing material riches, provided one could have but one of these blessings?
6. In what two commands does Jesus sum up all Christian living?

7. Why is the second command a necessary consequence of the first?
8. What do you understand by using all one's mind and all one's strength in loving God?
9. What did Jesus mean by the "Kingdom of God"?
10. How can followers of Jesus hasten the coming of this Kingdom?
11. Put in your own words the qualities of life demanded of a citizen of the Kingdom.
12. Show how these qualities can be manifested: (a) in the family, (b) by the merchant, (c) in politics, (d) in international relationships.
13. What attitude has a genuine Christian toward his *rights*?
14. What choice did America have to make in connection with the European war?
15. How can you criticize the action of Simeon Stylites and others like him?
16. In the terms of common life, what opportunity for manifesting Christian principles has the farmer?
17. In the business world, what principles of gain and investment must dominate a man who has close fellowship with Jesus?
18. How would such a fellowship influence the clerk, the servant in the house, or the man who works for wages?
19. What gave to Paul and to men like Judson their triumphant optimism?
20. Reviewing the entire month's study and meditating upon your own experience of fellowship with Jesus, give a list of the results which it seems to you come from such a fellowship.

STUDY VI

THE FUTURE HOPE

What an important place in our life the future holds! Without it we should be shut up to the actual achievements of the past. Important as these are, most of them would lose much of their significance if they could not be related to processes of growth and improvement. If we can see the outcome of present efforts in a better future, we are inspired to a nobler activity.

Christianity is a religion of hope as well as a religion of present experience. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." To believe in God means to hope for a better future. As the child looks forward to the time when he shall be a man, as the man of moral purpose looks forward to the realization of his ideals, so the Christian man looks forward to the realization of God's purposes.

In this study we shall consider three aspects of the future hope: (1) the belief in a better social order, (2) the possibilities of spiritual growth, and (3) life after death.

I. THE BELIEF IN A BETTER SOCIAL ORDER

First day.—§ 100. There is no more striking characteristic of the Old Testament literature than its unconquerable hopefulness. The Hebrew state was small, surrounded by enemies, constantly harassed in its attempts to organize its life. Yet the religious leaders were confident that Jehovah intended to make Israel dominant in the earth. At first this hope was political and military and full of national pride. We have so long spiritualized some of the songs of the kings that we forget how literally they were originally intended. Read Pss. 2 and 72 as coronation odes. Imagine a new king just come to the throne which his father had secured against all enemies. Subject peoples would like to rebel (2:3), but Jehovah laughs at their efforts. The kingdom is also to be extended over other nations, which shall become tributaries (2:8, 9; 72:8-11). This was not, however, a mere brutal conquest, for the poet believed that it would be the means of bringing justice—that most difficult social achievement—to the troubled peoples. Read 72:1-7, 12-14 as a fine social hope.

Second day.—§ 101. Read Isa. 11:1-9. There were two terrible conditions in Judah—hostile invasion, social injustice. War from without and iniquity within are ever the twin curses of nations. The prophets had bitterly denounced the monopolists, the unjust judges, the bribe-takers, the cruel oppressors, especially the wicked Assyrian (the Prussian of those days) who delighted in destroying

the little peoples. The writer of this passage believed the day was coming when these evils would be ended. He lived in the days of monarchy and therefore thought of the coming of a good king as the way to justice and peace. Note how first he describes a fair judge, putting human relations right, then poetically looks for the time of peace when the brutality of war and aggression will be over. He believed that a good ruler would make a good people. Read again Study IV, third day.

Third day.—§ 102. One of the remarkable passages in the Old Testament is Ezek., chaps. 40-48. Glance through these chapters and you will at first see a mass of uninteresting ecclesiastical details. But we must remember that Ezekiel was a priest and therefore would naturally think of the glorious future in ecclesiastical terms. The prophecy was written in Babylon after the temple had been destroyed and Jerusalem laid in ruins. But this godly priest believed that the chastisement was for the good of his people and that there would yet be a vigorous life for Israel. So he pictures in detail a new temple, to which the Holy God comes back that he may dwell with a purified people forever (43:1-9). Justice is to be administered by a good prince (45:9, 10). The land is to be fairly divided and even the Dead Sea is to become a fresh lake (47:8-12). Think of the courage and fine optimism of this hope for the future of an exiled people.

Fourth day.—§ 103. Read Isa. 65:17-25. The noblest Hebrew hopes are collected in the second part of the Book of Isaiah. They come from poets who sang of the happier days when a repentant Israel would enter into a new and glorious life in a renewed Jerusalem. Note that this passage has reference, not to heaven, but to Palestine, in which the people would carry on their agricultural labors in peace, living to an honorable old age.

Fifth day.—§ 104. Centuries had passed and the longed-for Golden Age had not come. Men seem to have given up hoping and to have settled down to commonplace living. But in the second century B.C. the Syrians tried to destroy the Jewish faith, and out of the anguish flashed a new hope. This is seen in the Book of Daniel. Read again Study III, fifteenth day. The world had seen one brutal empire after another, but this pious Jew believed that a new and nobler kingdom under the direction of God's people was about to become universal in the earth. Read Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14, 18, 22. Read 12:2 and notice that this hope transcends the social hopes that had preceded in that it finds a place for those who have died without seeing the better day. They are to rise from the dead and have a part with their brethren in the righteous kingdom.

Sixth day.—§ 105. Read Luke 6:20-26. Jesus was speaking to a people whose minds were filled with social and individual hopes, such as those of the Book of Daniel. He freely entered into those hopes, but he opened up a new way for their fulfilment. Not by force, ambition, selfishness, and aggression would the good time come, but by humility and love. Think of Jesus' whole life as an

attempt to realize in conduct the conditions of the social order, "the coming age," as it was called, for which he hoped. He summoned his disciples to be with him advance members of that kingdom that was coming.

Seventh day.—§ 106. Read Rev. 21:1—22:5. The Christians of the first century endured prolonged and systematic persecution. The writer of the Book of Revelation continues the hopes of the Book of Daniel, but instead of a Jerusalem saved from the Syrian tyrant the hope is for the martyred church saved from the Roman tyrant. Yet it is still a social hope to be realized in this world. The new Jerusalem comes down to earth (21:2); God dwells with men (21:3). It is a city resplendent above the glorious cities of that day. And the saints are to reign in it (22:5).

The early Christians looking for the messianic kingdom on the earth were troubled lest those who died might have no part in it. Christian hope triumphed over the fear. God would not forget his people who had fallen asleep. Read Paul's confident assurance, I Thess. 4:13-15.

Eighth day.—§ 107. Read II Pet. 3:1-13. Although one hundred years and more had passed, the hope of the early Christians for a speedy coming of Christ from heaven to establish the Kingdom of God had not been realized. Skeptical voices were raised challenging this hope. Things do not change, men said (vs. 4). We would do better to live for the world that surely exists rather than to give ourselves over to a vain hope. The author of this epistle vigorously rebukes this lack of faith. To believe in God means to be sure that he will fulfil his promises. With this faith holy living becomes reasonable (vs. 11). The "new heaven and the new earth" (vs. 13) did not come exactly as this writer expected. Two thousand years of Christian development with the best yet to come is a better fulfilment of God's purpose than the speedy end here depicted. But it was fidelity to their best hopes which enabled the early Christians to inspire a future vaster than any of which they dreamed.

Ninth day.—§ 108. The early Christians, feeling themselves to be relatively powerless in the great Roman Empire, hoped for a new era to come by miraculous intervention. But after the downfall of the Roman power a new vision opened. The mediaeval church looked forward to a Christian conquest of this world. Recall some of the events of church history in the light of this ideal—the constant attempt to compel kings and emperors to recognize the authority of the church, the zealous persecution of heretics, the crusades. These were expressions of a hope for a Christian civilization. To be sure, the ideal was limited to the church, but it was the inspiration of mediaeval civilization.

Tenth day.—§ 109. The most characteristic aspect of modern Christianity in contrast with the Christianity of a century and more ago is the missionary enterprise. Men are now dreaming of the day in which the world shall come under the influence of Christ. Making its way at first against skepticism and doubt,

the missionary cause is now arousing men to an appreciation of an indescribably great future for Christianity. Picture what it meant to Adoniram Judson, the pioneer American missionary to Burmah, to be able to say in 1817, "I have no doubt that God is preparing the way for the conversion of Burmah to His Son. Nor have I any doubt that we who are now here are in some little way contributing to this glorious event." Or hear George L. Mackay, after years of courageous facing of danger in Formosa, say to questioning friends at home, "Will Formosa be won for Christ? No matter what may come in the way, the final victory is as sure as the existence of God."

Eleventh day.—§ 110. Study Isaac Watt's great hymn, two stanzas of which are here given:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Could one completely believe in Christ without some such expectation of His universal reign on earth?

Twelfth day.—§ 111. Of equal significance with the missionary vision is the vision of a new international order in which nations shall co-operate for the common good. Said President Wilson in his address to Congress, January 8, 1918, in which he set forth his detailed program for a settlement of the war: "An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation, no part of the structure of international justice can stand." It is this vision of a better future which gives to the American participation in the war its religious significance. Compare this ideal with the conception of the Kingdom of God in biblical times.

Thirteenth day.—§ 112. When a man has devoted himself to a cause so great that it can be thought of as God's, his death in the service of the cause is something glorious, an experience so ennobling that the ordinary terrors of death disappear. President Lincoln finely expressed this truth in his Gettysburg address, when he said:

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall

not have died in vain; that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The heroes of Gettysburg so gave their lives that their memory can never perish, and their achievements are immortal.

II. THE POSSIBILITIES OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Fourteenth day.—§ 113. Read Luke 2:40 and 52. Try to picture the boyhood of Jesus and to appreciate what it meant to him to grow to maturity. Perhaps the happiest days of his life were before his public ministry when he was looking forward to the greater work before him.

Fifteenth day.—§ 114. Read Eph. 4:11-16. Note especially the prayer that those whom Paul addresses may "grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ." It is precisely this never-ceasing opportunity for growing to be more Christlike that gives to Christian living its vitality. We may hope in time to grow out of some of our defects if we hold this ideal before us.

Sixteenth day.—§ 115. Read Goethe's poem, beginning:

Purer yet and purer, I would be in mind,
 Dearer yet and dearer every duty find,
 Hoping still and trusting God without a fear,
 Patiently believing He will make all clear.

The poem is found in many modern hymnbooks. Study especially the last stanza:

Swifter yet and swifter ever onward run,
 Firmer yet and firmer step as I go on.
 Oft those earnest longings swell within my breast
 Yet their inner meaning ne'er can be expressed.

The immeasurable longings of an aspiring soul are witnesses to the inexhaustible riches of God's purposes.

Seventeenth day.—§ 116. The first stanza of Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* reads:

Grow old along with me
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made.
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith, "A whole I planned,
 Youth shows but half: trust God: see all, nor be afraid."

Old age is often dreaded. How does the religious faith expressed in this poem change one's view of growing old?

Eighteenth day.—§ 117. Tennyson has eloquently expressed the triumphant joy of one who loves growth and progress:

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she;
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

If one stops to find chief satisfaction in what is already past one's life is missing the religious exultation which comes from moving on to new glories. It is the man whose treasures are all in the past who fears death. For a forward-looking faith the "beautiful adventure" of death is only another step onward in an ever enriched experience.

III. THE FUTURE LIFE

Nineteenth day.—§ 118. How universal the conviction is that a righteous life possesses something which death cannot end may be illustrated by the following quotations from pre-Christian literature. An ancient Egyptian document, entitled *The Eloquent Peasant*, declares, "For justice is for eternity. It descends with him that doeth it into the grave, when he is placed in the coffin and laid in the earth. His name is not effaced on earth; he is remembered because of good." Socrates said, "There can no evil befall a good man, whether he be alive or dead." Plato declared, "All things work together for good, in life and death, to the friend of God." If one is to trust reason, it is incredible that noble human life should be proved worthless by death.

Twentieth day.—§ 119. Read Ps. 16. This is one of the later psalms representing the mature experience of Israel. The Old Testament religion could not complete itself without attaining to the appreciation of personal worth. Note the confidence in God's care. This singer declares that he is happy because he has God; nothing can overwhelm him. He may not even dread Sheol, the abode of the dead. The sense of divine fellowship would not be complete if the thought of death could destroy it. This experience of communion with God finds fuller expression in the Christian experience of immortality.

Twenty-first day.—§ 120. Read Matt. 22:23-33. Jesus answers the Sadducean quibble by pointing out that we cannot rationalize the future life by comparison with mundane conditions. Then in a word he gives a sure basis for the hope of eternal life. The great souls of the past were God's people. He has not forsaken them. They are his still. Many of us today are thinking of noble lives laid down in a great cause and we cry with a passionate faith, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living."

Twenty-second day.—§ 121. Read John 10:17, 18; 14:2, 12, 19, 28. Nothing is clearer than Jesus' unbroken confidence in eternal life. He means by

that a quality of life that is real enough to last through the experience of death. As the clouds were gathering about his path he looked through them and saw the Father. His faith in personal immortality was the fruit of his complete fellowship with God, and this he sought to impart to the disciples. Jesus made little use of argument. He simply offered to share his own triumphant faith with those who were willing to follow him in the way of life.

Twenty-third day.—§ 122. Paul became a Christian through a wonderful experience of Jesus as the living Christ. Ever after, Christ was to him the most certain reality. Read Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:38, 39; Phil. 1:20, 21. He lived the Christ life, felt secure in Him amid all tribulation and regarded himself as utterly devoted to his service. It was this complete unity with the Lord who had conquered death that gave Paul his own assurance of a like victory. Read I Cor. 15:1-23 and note that it is an expression of an experience of unity with a living and life-giving Savior. If we should put Paul's experience in modern language we should say, "I believe that Jesus lived with God on earth and lives with him still; I am seeking to share Jesus' experience of that blessed fellowship and believe that I shall share it forever." How much more vital and convincing is this experience of Paul's than any argument would be over disputed questions concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

Twenty-fourth day.—§ 123. A most suggestive utterance has come from a modern representative of critical skepticism. George Eliot wrote:

Oh may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence wage man's search
To vaster issues. So to live is heaven.

It is intolerable for George Eliot to limit life to the brief span of earthly existence. She speaks of living on in other lives. But the picture of the "choir invisible" suggests more than this. It is really harder to disbelieve in a future life than to believe in it.

Twenty-fifth day.—§ 124. The poet Wordsworth, feeling the spiritual vastness of his inner life in contrast to the physical limitations of earthly existence, suggests in his wonderful ode, "Intimations of Immortality," that our present life is but a continuation of a glorious pre-existence, and that therefore we may look forward to a return to this realm.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that riseth with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
From God, who is our home.

This is a genuinely religious experience of the reality of a larger world. We have a right to think of it as the home to which the soul may return at death.

Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

It is interesting to compare this poetic utterance with the late Professor William James's suggestion that the brain is an imperfect instrument used by the soul. This earthly life permits only a fraction of one's real spiritual self to find expression.

Twenty-sixth day.—§ 125. When to this natural religious affirmation of the soul one adds the experience of the presence of a loving God in one's earthly life the thought of the future becomes full of comfort. Whittier has finely expressed this:

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.
And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar:
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

Notice that here is a comforting faith which acknowledges ignorance concerning details of the future, but which is sure of God's never-failing goodness.

Twenty-seventh day.—§ 126. If in addition to the belief in the persistence of moral character and the mystic certainty of God's larger world and constant presence we picture the continued existence of loved ones after death, the "dark unknown" is a place where these loved ones have gone, and has no terrors for us.

A modern minister of the gospel, Rev. John W. Chadwick, has beautifully expressed this.

More homelike seems the vast unknown,
 Since they have entered there;
 To follow them were not so hard
 Wherever they may fare:
 They cannot be where God is not
 On any sea or shore;
 Whate'er betides, Thy love abides,
 Our God, forevermore.

Twenty-eighth day.—§ 127. A wonderful sense of security came to Tennyson as he pictured a divine Friend and Savior meeting him at the entrance to the vast new life. Read his "Crossing the Bar" as an expression of this faith. The last stanza reads:

For though from out the bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar.

Twenty-ninth day.—Thus all the noble longings and intuitions of the soul find reinforcement in the Christian faith; and the latter is shown to be eminently reasonable. The Christian who has learned the saving power of fellowship with Jesus during life can in that fellowship confidently face death, knowing that "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those that love him."

Thirtieth day.—Review rapidly this month's study and note again the three aspects of the future hope. All of these are essential to a full-rounded life. Sometimes one of the three assumes more importance and sometimes another. Before the great world-war, which began in 1914, men were thinking most of personal religious development. The output of the publishers of popular religious books, especially Christian Association textbooks, reflects this emphasis. As the war made men conscious of great national issues, the social-political hope came to the front. And as thousands of young men laid down their lives, the interest in personal immortality grew more insistent. Which aspect of the future hope brings most inspiration and comfort to you?

At the close of this course it is appropriate to call attention to some of the significant realities to which religious experience testifies:

I. *Religion persists in human life even when theologies and institutions change or vanish.* Some of the conceptions found in the Bible have been left behind—such as the military theology of early Hebrew history, or the rituals of later Judaism. But religious needs continue. The passing of inadequate ideas means the discovery of better means of expressing the realities of experience.

2. *Religion is too vast and complex to be restricted to one particular expression of it.* To know the "varieties of religious experience" is essential, both to keep us from harsh judgment of others and to enrich our own life. Our study of inspiration showed how impossible it is to set bounds to genuine religion.

3. *We need to distinguish between the intellectual problems and the practical outcome of a moral venture of faith.* Donald Hankey, the brilliant Oxford student who laid down his life in the Great War, defined religion as "betting your life that God exists." The assurance and spiritual strength which come from this *practical* attitude cannot be secured by mere intellectual speculation. To "will to do His will" is the surest way to "know the doctrine."

4. *Christian faith draws its vitality from a loyal and truthful personal relationship to Jesus.* Again and again in Christian history men have had to Christianize their theology and their institutions in order to preserve vital religion. The examination and testing of all our ideas and habits in the light of fellowship with Jesus is all-important.

5. Some of the realities which are fundamental are: the experience of God as the companion of one's inner life; the call of God to loyal service in the making of human history; the uplifting power of inspired and inspiring utterances; the illumination and the spiritual vitality derived from discipleship to Jesus; the possibilities of inner growth as that discipleship is extended to all portions of experience; the vision of the Kingdom of God in which we are co-workers; and the glowing hope which looks to a better future, both in this life and in the life to come, because God lives and works out his purposes. How many of these realities are real to you?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What evidence have we that the Hebrew religion was one of hope?
2. Name some of the men who contributed great expressions of this hope to the Hebrew literature.
3. Put into plain prose and few words Isa. 11:1-9 and 65:17-25.
4. What new element does the writer of the Book of Daniel add to this hope?
5. To what body does the New Testament history transfer the national hope of the Jews?
6. Name some ways in which the early Christian hope differs from the old vision of a future kingdom.
7. How does our interest in missions express the modern Christian hope?
8. What do we mean when we talk of the reign of Christ on earth?
9. Compare the new ideal of international justice with the ideal of Jesus of the coming of the Kingdom of God.
10. Do you know an individual life which has no ray of hope in it?
11. Would such a life be possible in fellowship with Jesus? Why?

12. Give some reasons why growth and progress in individual character are a mark of the true Christian.

13. How may the phenomenon of death be regarded in the continuing experience of one who fellowships with God?

14. Why is it important that the Christian should know about the future life?

15. Express in a few words Paul's whole Christian experience.

16. As you think over the greatest names of history—statesmen, poets, artists, educators—how many of them have shown in some way that they had confidence in the continuity of life?

17. In your own locality which aspect of the future hope is commanding most attention?

18. Have you ever seen an example of the passing away of some idea which was inadequate for the expression of the reality of religious experience? If so, what?

19. Give a summary of the realities which our authors consider essential.

20. Which of these seems most essential to you as you consider your own experience?

21. What have you gained from the study of this course?

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